

Structures of Representation: Metaphor and Mimesis in Jacques Derrida's Glas

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Structures of Representation:
Metaphor and *Mimesis* in Jacques Derrida's *Glas*

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Abstract

This thesis is an explication of *Glas*, a text which reflects Derrida's profound respect for the Hegelian dialectic, a structure in which each part has and knows its place. But *Glas* also works to expose a fundamental contamination between Hegelian conceptuality and those elements of textuality which the dialectic seeks to subordinate to, or expel from, itself. One such area of contamination is that of representation. For while Hegel determines representation as (the) outside of truth, Derrida demonstrates that this very determination is in fact structured and instituted by those 'outsides.'

One such 'outside' is that of family relations, which Hegel utilises as a metaphor for the relations of the dialectic in general. The question Derrida raises is whether this recourse to the family metaphor is a matter of pedagogy and exemplarity, or whether it conforms to a more fundamental necessity? This question forms the focus of Chapters One and Two of this thesis, which explore Derrida's reading of the Hegelian family as both a moment on the path to absolute knowledge and as a metaphor whose capacities disrupt and re-write the concept of metaphoricity.

However Derrida's question also points to a more fundamental problematic which Chapter Three will address. For what is it that determines and sanctions this opposition of inside and outside, that underpins these relations of production, of metaphoricity and representation? The answer to this is, I believe, *mimesis*. By transporting Derrida's understanding of *mimesis* into the context of the Hegelian family and *Glas*, it becomes possible to see the crucial role that this concept plays in the Hegelian dialectic, a role which also points the way to a philosophy that is not bound always to repeat the same, but which is open to chance and necessity, and to the possibility of writing philosophy differently.

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Abbreviations of Texts Cited

Works by Jacques Derrida:

- A** *Acts of Literature*
ed. Derek Attridge (1992, Routledge, New York)
- D** *Dissemination*
trans. Barbara Johnson (1982, University of Chicago Press, Chicago)
- EC** 'Economimesis'
trans. Richard Klein (1981, Diacritics, Vol. 11, John Hopkins University Press, Cornell University)
- G** *Glas*
trans. John P. Leavey Jr. & Richard Rand (1986, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln & London)
- LI** *Limited Inc,*
'Signature, Event, Context' trans. Samuel Weber & Jeffrey Mehlman, 'Limited Inc. a b c ...' trans. Samuel Weber, 'Afterword: Toward an Ethic of Discussion' trans. Samuel Weber (1988, Northwestern University Press, Evanston)
- M** *Margins of Philosophy*
trans. Alan Bass (1982, University of Chicago Press, Chicago)
- OG** *Of Grammatology*
trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1976, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore)
- SP** *Speech and Phenomena*
trans. David Allison (1973, Northwestern University Press, Evanston)
- TP** *The Truth in Painting*
trans. Geoff Bennington & Ian McLeod (1987, University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London)
- WD** *Writing and Difference*
trans. Alan Bass (1978, Routledge, London)

Introduction and Literature Review: Derrida and Deconstruction

I want to open this thesis by risking an abbreviation. Derrida's work is often, though by no means always, a response to a philosophical *ideal*, an *ideal* that has in turn determined the identity of philosophy. This *ideal* is that somewhere, behind or beyond, there is a guaranteed, self-identical and unique *absolute: what is*. This ideal has been given many different names throughout the history of metaphysics, but the important point for Derrida is that its "matrix" is the determination of "Being as *presence* in all senses of this word."¹ So that whatever this "centre," this "point of presence" or this "fixed origin" may be called in a particular philosophy, Derrida argues that all the names which relate to fundamentals, to principles, or to the origin – *eidos, arche, telos, energeia, ousia* (essence, existence, substance, subject), *aletheia*, transcendentality, consciousness, God – have always designated an invariable presence (WD, 279-80). This or that particular philosopher might, for example, question the form that the origin takes; but that things have origins, that the origin takes precedence over the double, the repetition or the copy, and that this relation goes back to an original presence, is rarely put to rigorous interrogation.

The concept of the origin has often been exempt from examination in any truly critical sense then because the order that it inspires is the very order of sense, of reason, of logic and of the *logos*. The origin or the centre must always be the origin or the centre *of something*, and conversely, whatever has an origin or a centre must always operate as a totality, as a structure, even if it is infinite. As Derrida says, the origin or centre serves to "orient, balance, and organize the structure – one cannot conceive of an unorganized structure" and at the same time, it limits the "*play* of the structure [...] inside the total form" (WD, 278). So that while the contents, the elements or the terms of the system may be substituted for one another, transformed, or transferred *within* the structure, the structure as a totality always remains

¹ Jacques Derrida, 'Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,' in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (1978, Routledge, London), 279. Henceforth, the title *Writing and Difference* is abbreviated as WD.

closed. Movement takes place within its borders, but the borders themselves are immutable. What's more Derrida says, the centre itself is exempt from these substitutions and transferrals. It governs movement but represents the immovable. This means that at both the core of the structure, at its bedrock or foundations, *and* at its outer reaches, its telos, there is projected the security of a limit, of an arrest. This ideal of philosophy represents, for Derrida, nothing less than a desire of the philosopher: that the centre of structure should be without structure, that it should not be subject to that to which it gives rise. This allows both for the ideal of a *terra firma* upon which philosophy can tread, and for a check-point at the limits of its terrain for what could otherwise be the endless *dissemination* of meaning.

Thus it has always been thought that the center, which is by definition unique, constituted that very thing within a structure which while governing that structure, escapes structurality. This is why classical thought concerning the structure could say that the center is, paradoxically, *within* the structure and *outside it*. [...] The concept of centered structure – although it represents coherence itself, the condition of the *episteme* as philosophy or science – is contradictorily coherent. And as always, coherence in contradiction expresses the force of a desire. The concept of centered structure is in fact the concept of play based on a fundamental immobility and a reassuring certitude, which itself is beyond the reach of play (WD, 279).

This structure of reason is not one structure amongst others; it is the structure of structure *as such*. Philosophy declares the one, true order. That there is only one order, the order of order, is a proposition that legitimates itself as it enunciates itself: at the moment order declares itself as order, it declares itself as the only possible order. Henceforth, all else must be considered *a priori* as disorder. As such, there may be determinate or *de facto* structures or orders, in the same way as there are determinate totalities, but all belong to the *de jure* concept of structure, all have this structurality of structure. Moreover, it is essential that this structure or this order appear to be natural, inherent in the world rather than applied to it (a point which then seems to be confirmed by the universal singularity of structure *as such*). Whatever or whomever constitutes the origin or *what is*, whether this is named God, spirit, or the *eidos*, must bestow the rational order, since it is the origin or centre which governs the totality. And since man belongs to the circle, to the totality, he too is formed by, and belongs to, this natural order. So

that when man declares himself as rational, when he makes the only possible declaration,² he is at the same time, and according to this absolute necessity, claiming *to belong to*, and *to be a product of*, in other words, *to be a repetition of*, the one, natural, and rational order. This order then repeats itself in man's relation to his own productions. The ideal of philosophy then, is that there is one origin, one structure, repeated and repeatable in its one identity. Which makes "the philosopher, who ever has but one thing to say, [...] the man of man."³

Much of Derrida's work is concerned with showing that this *ideal* of philosophy is just that, an *ideal* that has been *produced*, by a history, by decision, and by conceptuality. Derrida thus seeks to challenge its authority and legitimacy, and one of the ways in which he does so is through the deconstruction of the concept of *mimesis*. In Derrida's investigations of *mimesis* it is the order of order that comes under scrutiny. While *mimesis* is a concept that is dependent upon the concept of the origin, it also serves to legitimate that concept and the order to which it operates. The origin determines itself as productive rather than produced, as governing and determining structure rather than being governed or determined by it. Whenever there is a question of repetition, the origin thinks itself as the repeated, not the repeater. This is, Derrida says, "logic itself":

There is thus the 1 and the 2, the simple and the double. The double comes *after* the simple [...], that the image *supervenes* upon reality, the representation upon the present in presentation, the imitation upon the thing, the imitator upon the imitated. First there is what is, 'reality,' the thing itself, in flesh and blood as the phenomenologists say; then there is, imitating these, the painting, the portrait, the zographeme, the inscription or transcription of the thing itself. Discernability, at least numerical discernability, between the imitator and the imitated is what constitutes order.⁴

² Derrida's essay 'Cogito and the History of Madness' articulates the difficulties encountered when attempting to speak outside of the language of reason, to speak madness for example: "if discourse and philosophical communication (that is, language itself) are to have an intelligible meaning [...] they must simultaneously in fact and in principle escape madness." This "belongs to the meaning of meaning." (WD, 53)

³ 'White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy,' in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (1982, University of Chicago Press, Chicago), 248. Henceforth, the title *Margins of Philosophy* is abbreviated as M.

⁴ 'The Double Session,' *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (1982, University of Chicago Press, Chicago), 191. Henceforth, the title *Dissemination* is abbreviated as D.

This structure has such a natural and neutral air that it conforms to good sense itself. In conjunction with the philosophical ideal of *what is*, *mimesis* says that the repetition comes after the original and that it is inferior to the original. From this comes the debasement of writing, the signifier, metaphor and representation, on the basis that all are, or are engaged with, repetition, and as such are considered to be secondary. As such, *mimesis* plays a role in negotiating the dividing line between what belongs to philosophy as its ‘inside,’ as its propriety and truth, and what belongs to it as its ‘outside,’ as its negative reflection or inferior opposite. At the same time, this structure of oppositionality means that dialectics and philosophy determine themselves through the determination and exclusion of their other (D, 112). For having decided upon opposition as its structure and *what is* as its object, philosophy inevitably binds itself to the question of *what is not*, to negativity as the outside of *what is*. While philosophy properly concerns itself with presence as the general and essential form of *what is*, it must nonetheless resolve the difficulty of the present itself, of the present as that which is always different (D, 114). Derrida’s reading of Hegel shows how speculative dialectics tries to resolve this difficulty by making the present (the empirical, time and space, the example) into the being-there, the *da*, of the concept and part of its transcendental necessity. The natural sensible manifestations of a spirit that must know itself provide the grounds for philosophical thought, the means of a deduction by which the true ‘existence’ of what lies behind these representations can be posited. And as I hope to show, Hegel here repeats a pattern that establishes itself from Plato onwards; that there is *what is* and there is the outside of *what is*. Spirit, the *eidos* or *what is*, is always in opposition to its manifestations.

The outside and all that is housed under the heading of that chain is accepted by philosophy only on the grounds that it can be “governed, consciously and calculatedly, by the identifiable author of a system, [...] in the service of an autonomous theory constituted before and outside its own language, manipulating its tropes like tools. This is an undoubtedly philosophic, and certainly Platonic, ideal, an ideal that is produced in the separation (and order) between philosophy or dialectics on the one hand, and (sophistic) rhetoric on the other” (M, 224).

Hegel too submits to this ideal. Or rather, it forms the blindspot of a Hegelianism that would like to believe that it has garnered nothing from the outside, but has only produced from its own interiority the truth itself. And as Chapter One will show, this forms the imperative behind Hegel's claim that philosophy is inseparable from the means by which it comes to knowledge. Therein, suggests Derrida, lies Hegel's modernity: "nothing precedes textual generality absolutely. There is no preface, no program, or at least any *program* is already a *program*, a moment of the text, reclaimed by the text from its own exteriority." But, says Derrida, "Hegel brings this generalization about by saturating the text with meaning, by *teleologically* equating it with its *conceptual tenor*" (D, 20). The outside is permissible only on condition of the inside. Philosophy, and most certainly speculative dialectics, determines its task as the reappropriation of what is outside of it (D, 33). Even as Hegel concedes a certain value to the outside, even as he acknowledges a certain need for metaphor and representation, he nonetheless, and with an absolute necessity, anticipates the destruction of the figure. Or perhaps more importantly, he anticipates a destruction of the *need* for the figure, the moment when truth refinds itself in its "proper nudity" (M, 241). I believe that it is in this projected destruction of that *need* that Derrida locates the identity of dialectics, and a point of intervention for the discourse of deconstruction.

What is in question here then, is the devaluation of the outside and the schema that it implies. Derrida exhibits a chain that leads from philosophy's most basic assumption, that there is *what is*, to the debasement of repetition, of the outside, and of language *as* a repetition and an outside. And as I have already suggested, I believe that *mimesis* has a role to play in this schema and in the Hegelian dialectic. Whereas *mimesis* might often be understood to belong to aesthetics, its metaphysical usage expands its concept, extending its reach beyond what might be thought of as its proper domain; *mimesis* is not merely an aesthetic theory of imitation, but a way of accounting for the relations between *what is* and man's knowledge of *what is*. Understood from this perspective, *mimesis* retains its connection with this aestheticism in order to explain how the Good in-itself repeats and imitates itself in the good,

in knowledge or in the beautiful, becoming a kind of discourse that tells of that which cannot be immediately perceived in-itself. A code that is handed down to man, *mimesis* teaches how the divine translates itself into the here and now, how man is to perceive the great in the small and enact his own transmission of knowledge through this form of repetition, through the play of examples and representations. *Mimesis* then, plays a fundamental role in the constitution of knowledge and in the philosophical determination of that which is the origin and source of such knowledge.

In texts such as *Dissemination* Derrida explicitly concerns himself with the interpretations and roles of *mimesis* in the work of Plato and Mallarmé. Indeed, it crops up often, from *Of Grammatology* in which Derrida notes the role of *mimesis* in Rousseau, to ‘White Mythology’ in which Derrida points up the relation between *mimesis* and metaphor. But the importance of *mimesis* for Derrida has remained relatively unnoticed by Derrida’s commentators. That is, I believe its role in the construction and deconstruction of the texts of metaphysics, and in Derrida’s works which do not initially appear to concern *mimesis*, has remained insufficiently examined. One such example, with which I will be specifically interested throughout, is that of *Glas*. *Glas* is, among many other things, a text that concerns itself with interrogating what Hegel really means when he writes of representation and of the structure of the *Aufhebung* which allows for spirit to divide-in-order-to-know-itself. It seems to me that what Hegel implicitly relies upon is a concept of *mimesis*, an ontotheological *mimesis* that allows for the reappropriating movement of the *Aufhebung*. By reading *Glas* in conjunction with *Dissemination*, I hope to show that while Derrida does not explicitly call these relations mimetic, he is nonetheless articulating a structure of *mimesis*. *Mimesis* opens up new ways of understanding both Hegel’s system of *Vorstellung* and Derrida’s reading of it. Moreover, *Glas* shows how this conceptual *mimesis* comes unloosed from its ontotheological mooring: there is an-other *mimesis* that deconstructs the structure of phenomenology, that prevents representation from returning back to its source, instead multiplying and proliferating (on) the outside. Derrida shows that in this hall of mirrors, what also must be taken into account is the

mirror itself, the *verre*, glass, *glas*, that remains. This relation itself gets left out of the appropriating movement, leading Derrida to suggest that the three of dialectics becomes four, a crisis of opposition and a crisis of the *Aufhebung*. *Mimesis* governs and perpetuates a natural order or law of controlled repetition, a way of accounting for and reappropriating negativity. Derrida's interest lies in what happens when *mimesis* stops behaving as it ought, when it no longer submits to its own law, resulting instead in a proliferation which no longer submits to the origin and in which the outside can no longer simply be reappropriated, nor simply expelled.

However, before I turn to a more thorough reading of Hegel and the concept of *mimesis* I want first to examine Derrida's deconstruction of the concept of the origin, and some of the critical responses this deconstruction has inspired. As I have suggested, Derrida's interest in *mimesis* is directly linked to questions regarding concepts of the origin and of law, and of the relation between them as one of legitimation. *Mimesis* (in its metaphysical sense) is a way of structuring and of legitimating the way in which the truth, the *eidos*, the origin or spirit is revealed to man, and the ways in which man relates back to that source of knowledge and truth. In other words, it dictates how the intelligible translates itself into the sensible, the spirit into matter, the Good into the good, and it dictates how man is to interpret and read that translation, and thus gain knowledge of the source or origin.

But if Derrida's work is a deconstruction of this relation, of this *fort da* between the in-itself and man's knowledge of the in-itself, between representation and thing represented, the question at hand is how deconstruction relates to knowledge and to questions of legitimation. This thesis will contest that, in Hegel's phenomenology, the origin or spirit prescribes to itself the laws of self-division which allow spirit to represent itself to itself and as a result to know itself. In all cases, the representation is determined as secondary, derivative, and only provisionally useful. This operation is overseen by the law of *mimesis*. But is the deconstruction of the concept of the origin as source merely a bid to substitute *différance* in

place of the origin, to challenge not the structure of the relation but merely what it holds to be its highest prize? Rather than do away with concepts of the origin, with knowledge as a repetition of *what is*, does Derrida merely shift emphasis, placing *différance* at the heart of a theory which then sets about identifying the repetition of this one *différance* in differences? This kind of criticism, wherein *différance* is taken to be a transcendental concept more profound than that of the origin, is often directed at Derrida. It is to be found, for example, in the work of Jurgen Habermas, for whom Derrida's work is an inverted foundationalism which diverts from questions of knowledge, or what Habermas terms the 'proper' philosophical job of problem-solving, to rhetorical questions which undercut concepts of foundationalism and legitimation, only in fact to push further back into the even more foundational recesses of *différance*. *Différance* then becomes a kind of law-giver which prescribes the play of differences, and deconstruction becomes a theory whose task it is to describe this play. While I don't think Habermas' historical relativising of Derrida is particularly helpful, nor his reading of Derrida correct, it is worth examining since it reveals not only some common misreadings of Derrida's work (plus what happens when misreadings lead to other misreadings), but also throws up some interesting difficulties or apparent paradoxes at work in deconstruction.

Jurgen Habermas

Habermas's *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* reads as a historical narrative of failure, of missed opportunities and philosophical wrong-turns.⁵ For Habermas, the work of the early Hegel contained something like a blueprint for a "democratic self-organization of society," a model for the "mediation of the universal and the individual [...] provided by the *higher-level intersubjectivity of an uncoerced formation of will* within a communication community existing under constraints toward cooperation" (Habermas, 1987, 40). If this path had been

⁵ Jurgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (1987, The Polity Press, Cambridge).

followed it could have resulted in a pragmatic communicative practice based on reasonable argumentation and oriented toward uncoerced consensus. Regrettably, at least for Habermas, this path has not been pursued, neither by the later Hegel nor by those who came after him and on whom *The Philosophical Discourse* sets its sights.

This history of failure forms the backdrop to Habermas's reading of Derrida, who offers another woeful example of opportunities lost. Habermas identifies Derrida as successor to Nietzsche and Heidegger. These forefathers sought to do away with the "thoroughly concealed domination" of "the iron cage" of reason (Habermas, 1987, 56). Nietzsche takes recourse to the Dionysian motif of "*the god who is coming*" (Habermas, 1987, 91), to "experiences that are displaced back into the archaic realm – experiences of a self-disclosure of a de-centred subjectivity, liberated from all constraints of cognition and purposive activity, all imperatives of utility and morality" (Habermas, 1987, 94). For him the "world appears as a network of distortions and interpretations for which no intention and no text provides a basis," in which "art counts as man's genuine metaphysical activity, because life itself is based on illusion, deception, optics, the necessity of the perspectival and of error" (Habermas, 1987, 95). Nietzsche wants "a critique of metaphysics that digs up the roots of metaphysical thought without, however, giving up philosophy. He proclaims Dionysus a philosopher and himself the last disciple and initiate of the god who does philosophy" (Habermas, 1987, 97).

Heidegger takes up this baton from Nietzsche and continues down the track of carrying out a "totalizing critique of reason" which reaches "beyond the origins of Western history back to archaic times in order to rediscover the traces of the Dionysian" (Habermas, 1987, 102). Heidegger counters the foundationalism of reason "by excavating a still more deeply laid – and henceforth unstable – ground" (Habermas, 1987, 139). This ground is a temporalised *Dasein*, which grounds itself only in itself. Being, which has taken over the role of Dionysus, has abandoned beings. Nonetheless, *Dasein* becomes the "equivalent for the creative activity of transcendental subjectivity" (Habermas, 1987, 166). It "project[s] the world" (Habermas,

1987, 150), even if it “can only be portrayed negatively” (Habermas, 1987, 102-3), “meditatively experienced and presented narratively, but not argumentatively retrieved and explained” (Habermas, 1987, 152). Consequently, Heidegger challenges a language practice dominated by knowledge and truth claims, in favour of the poetic which takes, following Nietzsche, the form of a new mythology (Habermas, 1987, 89) in which “the world of the unforeseen and the absolutely astonishing open up, [...] which neither hides nor reveals, is neither appearance nor essence” (Habermas, 1987, 93-4).

Habermas’s reading of Nietzsche and Heidegger forms the context for his understanding of Derrida. Derrida desires to confront occidental metaphysics with its ‘other’ and to proceed by means of “radical upheavals” (Habermas, 1987, 159). To this end, Derrida translates Heidegger’s *destruction* into a ‘postmodern’ deconstruction, with “the self-overcoming of metaphysics” setting “the tone for Derrida’s enterprise” (Habermas, 1987, 159). While Derrida may seek to distance himself from Heidegger’s later works, from his “metaphorics of proximity, of simple and immediate presence” (Habermas, 1987, 162), the influence of Heidegger and Nietzsche remain. The result: this ‘postmodern Derrida’ “moves about [...] in the subversive world of the partisan struggle – he would even like to take the house of Being apart and, out in the open, ‘to dance ... the cruel feast of which the *Genealogy of Morals* speaks’ ” (Habermas, 1987, 162).

For Habermas then, the history of philosophy operates something like a continuum in which the *postmodern* Derrida follows these modern thinkers and is therefore bound, somewhat inevitably, to repeat their errors. Consequently, Habermas’s argument against Derrida is twofold; firstly, he is read as repeating the quest for the absent origin, replacing this origin with *différance* which, since it is never present and never presented, he can articulate only in the style of a negative theology (negatively, prosaically, but never argumentatively). And secondly, having established *différance* at the origin, an absent prescriber of wanton freeplay,

Derrida then proceeds to examine the texts of metaphysics as rhetorical objects, concerned not with their meaning or their problem-solving capacities but only with their performative or literary elements, thus dissolving the distinctions between genres and the argumentative power of reason.

Habermas's interest in pragmatics, in rational argumentation and consensus sets the tone for his appraisal of Derrida. In what might be considered his first wrong move, if you are Habermas at any rate, Derrida does not rely on the resources of pragmatism and is unconcerned with "the analyses of ordinary language [or] the grammar of language or with the logic of its use" (Habermas, 1987, 163). Instead, Derrida makes a "startling turn to grammarology" and to "the science of writing." (Habermas, 1987, 163-64). According to Habermas, "[g]rammatology recommends itself as a guide for the *critique* of metaphysics because it goes to the roots of phonetic writing" which is "not only coextensive but also equiprimordial with metaphysical thought" (Habermas, 1987, 163, my emphasis). Leaving aside for now the fact that deconstruction has never pretended or wanted to be a *critique*, Derrida's grammarology allows him to explore the metaphysical privileging of speech over writing. Derrida identifies a chain between the *logos*, truth and the spoken word; all are privileged by presence, and as a result, Derrida goes in hot pursuit of what he calls 'phonocentrism,' this relation between speech and presence.

So in one sense Habermas is right, Derrida is not expressly concerned with pragmatics. But he is concerned with what makes pragmatics, with such theories or critiques, possible *and* impossible. Yes, he is perhaps less concerned with the logic of language use than with the logic of this logic; less concerned with 'analyses of ordinary language' than with the logic already at work in determining what constitutes so-called 'ordinary' language. But this is why Habermas is also wrong, for as Derrida's work on speech acts confirms (and Habermas is no stranger to this since it forms the basis of his '*Excursus*' on Derrida), understanding 'grammarology' has important ramifications for speech act theory and pragmatism; indeed it

goes right to the heart of concepts of consensus, communication, to the conditions that make such concepts possible and impossible.

Derrida locates these conditions of possibility and impossibility at the level of writing and, as will become clear, of *différance*. He reassesses the relation between speech and writing. Writing offers an autonomy, and as a result a durability, that speech cannot offer. There are only books because the original Book has been lost. Indeed, not lost says Derrida; the original never existed *as such*: “This lost certainty, this absence of divine writing, that is to say, first of all, the absence of the Jewish God [...] does not solely and vaguely define something like ‘modernity.’ As the absence and haunting of the divine sign, it regulates all modern criticism and aesthetics” (Derrida quoted in Habermas, 1987, 165). Yet in the face of this absence, writing or textuality carry on. The text does not offer the prospect of a meaningful whole, of meaning meeting up with itself assured by some meta-authorial intention, as the book of nature or Holy Scripture had done. But for Habermas, this context of catastrophe and loss does not prevent Derrida from attaining a kind of messianic hope; the written substrate is the only thing that survives corruption; it signifies even if it remains unintelligible. In Habermas’ words, which have a Hegelian spin to them, written “matter survives the trace of the spirit that has vanished” (Habermas, 1987, 165). From Habermas’s perspective, Derrida’s ‘writing’ is inspired by a Jewish understanding of tradition; more removed than Christianity from the Book, Derrida remains more rigorously bound to erudition in scripture. This allows Habermas to claim that Derrida’s “program of a scripture scholarship with claims to a critique of metaphysics is nourished from religious sources.” (Habermas, 1987, 165). To this Judaism is added a post-Heideggerian edge: Derrida is forbidden any thought about a supreme entity behind this textuality. Instead, Derrida appeals to writing as “a model in terms of which the aura is to be removed from the happening of truth.” (Habermas, 1987, 165), Derrida’s ‘writing’ has a “stony autonomy in relation to all living contexts” (Habermas, 1987, 166), yet retains an “*absolute readability*” which constitutes the possibility of its repetition that transcends everything in this world, survives death of every possible reader and writer: it thus “promises

salvation for its semantic content” beyond holocaust, offering instead a “testamentary essence” (Habermas, 1987, 166). For Habermas, Derrida thus makes the basic insight of structuralism more pointed (Habermas, 1987, 166). By throwing a little Heidegger and Judaism into the mix, he is able to declare writing as the subject-less generator of meaning.

To claim the *absolute readability* of writing in the face of absence is one thing. But what about presence itself? Even if writing supersedes speech in terms of longevity and autonomy, Derrida still needs to explain why speech does not retain superiority in the ‘here and now.’ To this end, Habermas refers to Derrida’s reading of Husserl’s theory of signs in *Speech and Phenomena*. Husserl thought that by separating out two forms of signs, indication and expression, he could show how ideality or pure meaning is independent of the sign-substrate of language. Whereas in acts of ‘communication’ the speaker relies on the facticity or materiality of indications to represent meaning to others, Husserl contends that meaning is not *essentially* dependent on these sensible manifestations or representations. He finds confirmation for this in solitary mental life: in speaking to oneself, meaning is self-present.⁶ It does not have to go outside of itself to be represented in the form of indications, but is expressed in the self-presence of consciousness. Indication is therefore secondary and derivative as regards the ideal purity of expression (SP, 49).

Husserl’s theory is thus dependent upon the concept of self-presence, and it is this that Derrida seeks to challenge. For Husserl acknowledges that in order for idealities to be recognisable, they must be recognisable as the same (SP, 50). That is, ideality must be repeatable as the same, the present ideality must be a repetition of a past ideality that could also be repeated in the future. Husserl lets retention and protention slip into his theory; the ‘now’ of an ideality is indebted to an act of re-presentation, perception indebted to a reproducing recognition. The present ‘now’ is dependent upon a ‘past now’ and the possibility of a ‘future now’ (SP, 64-68).

⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, trans. David Allison (1973, Northwestern University Press, Evanston), 43. Henceforth, the title *Speech and Phenomena* is abbreviated as SP.

Presence is thus dependent upon spacing and temporalisation; transcendental subjectivity is constituted and compounded, produced by repetition and temporality. Moreover, not only is ideality dependent upon repetition, it is thus dependent upon a 'formal identity' which is 'necessarily ideal.' In place of the ideal meaning-in-itself, with which Husserl started out, Derrida offers up the "ideality of the sensible form of the signifier" (SP, 52). Presence is constituted by repetition, materiality, spacing, temporalisation, difference. The ideal interiority of self-presence, of consciousness, is dependent upon the exteriority of the signifier. No longer can presence be absolute, and the sensible merely derived from the intelligible (SP, 82-85). Instead, the living-moment of the present is produced by, or is an effect of, repetition, difference, temporalisation and otherness. Derrida condenses these differences under the name of *différance*. The 'a' of this *différance* cannot be spoken, only written, and it suggests both difference and deferral. It emphasises the temporal separation and otherness that make possible identity and presence.

Derrida shows then, that presence is made both possible, and necessarily impossible, by *différance*. This *différance* is at the basis of both the written and the spoken word. A subject-less generator of structures, it establishes the differences between sign elements that are reciprocally related to one another in abstract order.

Not without some violence, Derrida combines the 'differences,' in the structuralist sense of the term, with the '*différance*' worked out in connection with Husserl's theory of meaning. [...] all linguistic expressions are to a certain extent set in operation by an archewriting not itself present. The latter fulfils the function of world-disclosure by preceding every process of communication and every participating subject; and it does so, of course, by withholding itself, resisting parousia, and leaving behind no more than its trace in the referential structure of the produced text (Habermas, 1987, 180).

And here is the crux of the issue for Habermas: this "metaphor" of archewriting and its trace, as well as that of *différance*, is a repetition of Nietzsche's and Heidegger's Dionysian motif of the god who makes his promised presence all the more palpable through his absence. Derrida does not break "with the foundationalist tenacity of the philosophy of the subject; he only

makes what it had regarded as fundamental dependent on the still profounder – though now vacillating or oscillating – basis of an originary power set temporally aflow” (Habermas, 1987, 178-9). This more profound ground has shifted from Being to différance so that “[w]hat is first and last is not the history of Being, but a picture-puzzle: The labyrinthine mirror-effects of old texts, each of which points to another, yet older text without fostering any hope of attaining the archewriting. [...] Derrida clings to the dizzying thought of a past that has never been present.” (Habermas, 1987, 179). Habermas sees Derrida repeat Heidegger; he lays bare his inverted foundationalism by going beyond the ontological difference to the différance of writing “which puts an origin already set in motion yet one level deeper” (Habermas, 1987, 181). He promotes a mystification which allows him to disconnect deconstructive thinking from scientific analysis, landing at an avowal of the indeterminate authority of a no longer holy scripture. With his “anarchist wish to explode the continuum of history” (Habermas, 1987, 182), he degrades politics and contemporary history to the status of the foreground so as to “romp all the more freely [...] in the sphere of the ontological and the archewriting” (Habermas, 1987, 181). He remains caught in “a tradition that sticks to the traces of the lost divine scripture and keeps itself going through heretical exegesis of the scriptures” (Habermas, 1987, 182).

Derrida’s grammatically circumscribed concept of an archewriting whose traces call forth all the more interpretations the more unfamiliar they become, renews the mystical concept of tradition as an ever *delayed* event of revelation. [...] The labor of deconstruction lets the refuse heap of interpretations, which it wants to clear away in order to get to the buried foundations, mount ever higher (Habermas, 1987, 183).

It is to this ‘refuse heap of interpretations’ that Habermas then turns his attentions. Derrida’s Jewish messianism determines the tools of deconstruction. As Habermas argues in his ‘*Excursus on Leveling the Genre Distinction between Philosophy and Literature*’ (Habermas, 1987, 185-210), the totalising self-critique of reason gets caught in a performative contradiction; it can only operate by means of the very thing it seeks to critique. To avoid this contradiction, Derrida takes recourse to a form of

negative extremism, finding the essential in the marginal and incidental, the right on the side of the subversive and the outcast, and the truth in the peripheral and the inauthentic. A distrust of everything direct and substantial goes along with an intransigent tracing of mediations, of hidden presuppositions and dependencies. The critique of origins, of anything original, of first principles, goes hand in hand with a certain fanaticism about showing what is merely produced, imitated and secondary in everything (Habermas, 1987, 187).

If reason no longer has absolute authority, then the tools of reason must also be challenged. The demands of scientific analyses, of validity and normativity are weapons of reason. Deconstruction therefore aims at dismantling “smuggled-in” basic conceptual hierarchies, such as the oppositions between speech and writing, the intelligible and the sensible, logic and rhetoric, in order to expose and overthrow these relations of domination (Habermas, 1987, 187). And if logic can be subordinated to aesthetics for example, then there is no need to abide by logical criteria. This leads Derrida to treat the philosophical text as the literary text, to obey the standards of literary criticism. For Habermas, this form of critique is not immediately concerned with the network of discursive relationships of which arguments are built. Deconstruction is not subject to the criteria of problem solving but orients itself toward the world-disclosive power of the poetic.

Derrida proceeds by a critique of style, in that he finds something like indirect communications, by which the text itself denies its manifest content, in the rhetorical surplus of meaning inherent in the literary strata of texts that present themselves as nonliterary. [...] Thanks to their rhetorical content, texts combed against the grain contradict what they state, such as the explicitly asserted primacy of signification over the sign, of the voice in relation to writing, of the intuitively given and immediately present over the representative and the postponed-postponing (Habermas, 1987, 189).

This can only succeed however, if Derrida can show that he has not simply turned that philosophical text into a literary text, but that it is *always already in truth* a literary one. In turn, Habermas’ argument thus depends on *proving* that Derrida shows that the philosophical text was always already in truth a literary one. To this end, Habermas seeks to show how Derrida dissolves the genre distinction between philosophy and literature. Derrida shows the impossibility of clearing the metaphysical text of all metaphor and rhetoric. For Habermas this equals an attempt to show that philosophy is determined no longer as a specialised discourse

oriented to cognitive problem solving, but part of the universal text, an all-embracing context of texts inscribed in the medium of writing. Specific genres lose their autonomy in the face of an all-devouring context and uncontrollable happening of spontaneous text production. According to Habermas, Derrida wants to show that both the philosophical and the poetic, the truthful and the fictive, all belong to this general text.

Habermas examines Derrida's exploration of speech acts in his work on Austin and Searle in 'Signature, Event, Context' and 'Limited Inc. a b c...'⁷ (It is worth noting that here Habermas does not refer directly to texts by Derrida, but relies on critics such as Jonathan Culler. The reason: "Since Derrida does not belong to those philosophers who like to argue, it is expedient to take a closer look at his disciples" (Habermas, 1987, 193).) For the sake of space I will radically abbreviate Derrida's encounter with Austin and Searle. Derrida seeks to show how repetition and iterability challenge the strict demarcation of 'normal' language use from abnormal or parasitical use, the serious from the nonserious, the truth from fiction. Context and intention no longer retain absolute authority; sentences, words, even entire texts, can be 'grafted' onto other contexts, and while nothing can be understood outside of context, no context can absolutely contain a text. Habermas shows how Searle responds to this by bringing into play the tacit supplementation of all speech acts by background conditions that can orient validity. These conditions are what are understood by a particular community as 'normal,' and where they become problematic, it is assumed they could be decided by rationally motivated agreement.

Both are strong, that is to say idealizing, suppositions; but these idealizations are not arbitrary, logocentric acts bought to bear by theoreticians on unmanageable contexts in order to give the illusion of mastery; rather, they are presuppositions that the participants themselves have to make if communicative action is to be at all possible. (Habermas, 1987, 197).

⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc.* (1988, Northwestern University Press, Evanston) includes 'Signature, Event, Context,' trans. Samuel Weber & Jeffrey Mehlman; 'Limited Inc. a b c ...' trans. Samuel Weber; 'Afterword: Toward an Ethic of Discussion' trans. Samuel Weber. Henceforth, the title *Limited Inc* is abbreviated as LI.

For Habermas and Searle, language games work because the participants presuppose intersubjectively identical ascriptions of meaning; they presuppose idealisations that transcend any particular language game, giving rise to the possibility of agreement that is open to criticism on the basis of validity claims. Language is thus constantly tested, and it is in relation to standing this test that ordinary and parasitic language uses can be distinguished (Habermas, 1987, 199). Whereas language in the ‘real’ world has illocutionary force, and can be tested and legitimated according to this force, in the poetic realm this illocutionary force is bracketed off. Poetic language has a ‘world creating capacity.’ But robbed of their illocutionary force, poetics merely imitate ‘real’ acts: their “illocutionary force is mimetic” (Habermas, 1987, 201). Here, context plays a different role; poetics have a world-disclosive function in which relations to the context of ‘reality’ are virtualised. Fiction is thus not the truth, and the truth is not a fiction. These are separate, autonomous realms, the power of both of which Derrida denies in his genre-leveling (Habermas, 1987, 204). But

[b]ecause Derrida denies both, he can analyze any given discourse in accord with the model of poetic language, and do so as if language generally were determined by the poetic use of language specialized in world-disclosure. From this viewpoint, language as such converges with literature or indeed with ‘writing.’ This *aestheticizing of language* [...] is purchased with the twofold denial of the proper senses of normal and poetic discourse (Habermas, 1987, 205).

For Habermas, Derrida’s aesthetic contextualism blinds him to the everyday communicative practices that make learning possible and which are tested in the light of criticisable validity claims. Derrida permits the problem-solving capacity of language to disappear behind its world-creating capacity. Habermas accuses Richard Rorty of a “similar leveling” (Habermas, 1987, 206), in which ‘argument’ comes to be about the motives and terms of discussion. With nothing exempt from this difficulty, there can be no hope of resolution, only more language games. The ‘yes’ and ‘no’ of participants in discussion comes to be seen as so prejudiced and rhetorically overdetermined that they are seen as symptoms of the waning vitality of discourses, rather than deficient solutions to problems or invalid answers. For Habermas, the

Derrida-Rorty contextualist concept of language is blind to the force of the counterfactual. As a result, they are both therefore also mistaken about the powers of specialised discourses, whether they be literary or philosophical. They miss the unique status of discourses differentiated from ordinary communication and tailored to specific validity dimensions (for example, truth or normative rightness), or those discourses tailored to a single complex of problems (for example, truth or justice).

In modern societies, the spheres of science, morality, and law have chrystallized around these forms of argumentation. The corresponding cultural systems of action administer *problem-solving capacities* in a way similar to that in which the enterprises of art and literature administer *capacities for world-disclosure*. Because Derrida overgeneralizes [...] the poetic – he can no longer see the complex relationship of the ordinary practice of normal speech to the two extraordinary spheres, differentiated, as it were, in opposite directions (Habermas, 1987, 207).

Habermas would have it that discourses have one linguistic function and one dimension of validity at a time. If philosophical thinking were to be relieved of its duty for solving problems it would be robbed not only of its seriousness but of its productivity. Conversely, literary-critical power gets displaced from appropriating aesthetic experiential contents into a critique of metaphysics. Both are robbed of their substance. And “[w]hoever transposes the radical critique of reason into the domain of rhetoric in order to blunt the paradox of self-referentiality, also dulls the sword of the critique of reason itself” (Habermas, 1987, 210). In the end, Derrida’s negative theology, inspired by a Jewish dependence on scripture, allows Derrida to treat all texts as issued from the same interminable and indeterminate source, a general text which subsumes the identities and specificities of both philosophy and literature.

Is Différance God?

In *The Philosophical Discourse* Habermas, rightly in my opinion, shows up the connection between questions of origins and foundations, and questions of language, discourse and genre, although as will become clear, I disagree with him as to the nature of this connection and its implications. He believes that *différance* functions for Derrida as a never-present origin,

another name for God, which in turn determines the approach of deconstruction as scriptural exegesis. He sees Derrida as attempting to circumvent any questions about the validity of this God by claiming that it is beyond all criteria for validity, that it is indeed a condition for such criteria and thus cannot be subjected to it. Armed in this way, deconstruction becomes a form of rhetorical practice that resembles negative theology's approach to God, prescribed by, and reverential toward, this father-figure that is all the more powerful for its absence. For Habermas then, *différance* determines (grounds, founds and prescribes) not only how deconstruction approaches *différance*, but also how it approaches all other concepts and texts; that is, *différance* determines 'method.' This method in turn is a kind of wanton freeplay (freed from the criteria of validity) which allows Derrida to consistently search for the inconsistent. Inconsistency thereby takes on the role formerly assigned to reason, becoming the dominant force in a world where everything can be shown to be something else.

Now, as I have already suggested, I don't agree with Habermas's reading of Derrida. But in order to understand what *différance* really does mean, I want to pursue Habermas's criticisms. Derrida claims that *différance* is neither a concept nor a foundation nor a ground, neither an essence nor supraessential and that, as a result, he cannot be practising a form of negative theology.

[...T]he detours, locutions, and syntax in which I will often have to take recourse will resemble those of negative theology, occasionally even to the point of being indistinguishable from negative theology. Already we have had to delineate *that différence is not*, does not exist, is not a present-being (*on*) in any form; and we will be led to delineate also everything *that it is not*, that is, *everything*; and consequently that is has neither existence nor essence. It derives from no category of being, whether present or absent. And yet those aspects of *différance* which are thereby delineated are not theological, which are always concerned with disengaging a superessentiality beyond the finite categories of essence and existence, that is, of presence, and always hastening to recall that God is refused the predicate of existence, only in order to acknowledge his superior, inconceivable, and ineffable mode of being. Such a development is not in question here, and this will be confirmed progressively. *Différance* is not only irreducible to any ontological or theological – ontotheological – reappropriation, but as the very opening of the space in which ontotheology – philosophy – produces its system and its history, it includes ontotheology, inscribing it and exceeding it without return ('*Différance*,' in M, 6).

Derrida says some important things here, two of which I want to focus on. He says that while deconstruction is not concerned with “disengaging a superessentiality beyond the finite categories of essence and existence” nonetheless the approach (the detours and syntax) of deconstruction does resemble that of negative theology. So that while Derrida is distancing *différance* from a superessentiality which lays beyond the powers of finite discourse, what *différance* seems to share with the name of ‘God’ in negative theology is a need to be approached negatively (as neither this nor that). It too seems to be in some way beyond such finitising language, or at least to have a complex relation with language. I will return to this point at the end of this introduction.

Derrida also suggests that *différance* is a condition of possibility for ontotheology and thus for the name ‘God.’ And the problem is that the term ‘condition of possibility’ does have foundationalist or logical connotations. Is Derrida granting *différance* the productive and validating power that was formerly assigned to the origin? Are conditions of possibility (and as will be shown, impossibility) just a way of moving further up the food chain, a way of granting *différance* more authority than reason, thus providing the kind of foundationalism that Habermas identifies? What does Derrida mean when he suggests that *différance* is a condition of possibility for negative theology; that is, negative theology is somehow dependent upon *différance* as “the opening of the space in which ontotheology – philosophy – produces its system and its history...”? *Différance* inscribes and exceeds ontotheology and philosophy; it has, Derrida says in the same essay, a “radical alterity” and “irreducibility” (M, 21) and it “(is) ‘older’ than the ontological difference or than the truth of Being ” (M, 22). Or again, *différance* is “transcendental”⁸ and is “more ‘ancient’ than what is ‘primordial’” (SP, 103). *Différance* is starting to look like pretty powerful stuff, and indeed not a little foundational.

⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Edmund Husserl’s Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, trans. John P. Leavey Jr. (1978, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln & London), 153 .

Yet Derrida consistently denies that this *différance*, which should not be seen as a master-name and so can be replaced by “nonsynonymous substitutions” (M, 12), this “unnameable is not an ineffable Being which no name could approach: God, for example” (M, 26) and “the letter *a* in *différance* is not the primary prescription or the prophetic annunciation of an imminent and as yet un-heard of nomination” (M, 27). It is itself “*enmeshed*” in *différance*, itself differed and deferred (M, 27). As such, *différance* “governs nothing, reigns over nothing, and nowhere exercises any authority”. There is “no kingdom of *différance*” (M, 22). *Différance*, for Derrida, is beyond the reach of the finite terms that seek to encase and reduce it, including the term *différance*; rather it exceeds such terms. But that does not make it into some super-power that exists in some *topos ouranios* from which it exerts its power.

So there is a fundamental disagreement as to the nature and role of *différance* here. Despite Derrida’s denials, is this *différance*, as Habermas suggests, another name for God? To take Habermas’s point and run with it a little, it might be asked whether *différance* does in some way govern *différance*, govern its difference to itself, defer it from itself? And in so doing, while this ‘*différance* of *différance*’ makes *différance* quasi-transcendental (this ‘quasi’ will be examined), at the same time, does this not grant the ‘quasi’ more authority than a simple transcendental? Does this *différance* of *différance* itself simply confirm not only *différance*’s primordially, but also its superiority and authority? Is it *more* than transcendental and is that the reason why finite terms cannot approach it and thus the reason why deconstruction resembles negative theology? For Habermas, the answer to these questions is ‘yes,’ that whatever Derrida may say he does attempt to make *différance* more transcendental, more original, more causal, more productive, even than the God of ontotheology. Geoffrey Bennington sums up this argument as follows:

Let us suppose [...] the signifier ‘*différance*’ or (‘trace’) would refer us to a signified to which, in the last analysis, all the other signifiers of the language would refer us too. Every concept would refer to the concept of ‘*différance*’ as its final guarantee: ‘*différance*’ would thus be the first or last word in the language, and the first or last

concept, the keystone of the system. Or else we might say that 'différance' was the center that allowed the play of differences among themselves, while withdrawing itself from that play (WD, 278-80). In this case 'différance' would be put forward as a new foundation, the latest truth at the end of a long list [...]. From the height of its splendid transcendence, 'différance' would control the whole affair, which it would, moreover have produced [...]. 'Différance would thus be a name of God.'⁹

In this description, which fits the role assigned to *différance* by Habermas, *différance* becomes the origin of differences and the master prescriber of how such *différences* are to be read. It is important to remember that Habermas's point against Derrida is a structural one. He is concerned with *différance* as possessing a god-like capacity in a structure it both governs, since it is the origin of the structure, and is governed by, since Derrida has undercut the foundational capacity of origins. In response to Habermas then, I want first to look at this relation between *différance* and law.

While Derrida claims that deconstruction is not a method or critique,¹⁰ nonetheless it does seem to be some kind of strategy, what Derrida calls "blind tactics" (M, 7). Does this amount to deconstruction being governed or prescribed by *différance*? Ought this to be understood as a causal, productive relation, as *différance* producing *différences* which deconstruction, attuned and directed, then picks up on? Is the quasi- enough to do away with this kind of argument, or is it simply a way of fudging the issue a bit, a language game that undoes the rules of philosophy whilst simultaneously trying to win by those very rules: 'look, *différance* is the answer, its even more transcendental than the transcendental!'? Does Derrida therefore conform in some way to legitimation requirements, even as he puts those under the deconstructive knife?

⁹ Geoffrey Bennington, 'Derridabase' in *Jacques Derrida* (1993, University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London), 77-78.

¹⁰ Jacques Derrida, 'Letter to a Japanese Friend,' trans. David Wood & Andrew Benjamin, in *Derrida and Difference* Ed.s David Wood & Robert Bernasconi (1988, Northwestern University Press, Evanston), 3.

The answers to these questions will frame the main interest of this thesis: the relation between the origin and its representations, or, if *différance* has become the non-originary origin, the relation between *différance* and representation, repetition, and exemplarity. For Derrida, philosophy has often centred itself around the ideal of knowledge as *adequatio*, a matching up of *what is* and knowledge, with *what is* prescribing the rules to knowledge and knowledge seeking to conform to *what is*. So that, while God or the origin (*what is*) may be absent, philosophy lives on its substitutes, on the law of substitution that is regulated by the laws of, or relations between, origin and telos, revelation and representation, of meaning meeting up with itself after and by means of a detour. The origin thus issues delegates, representatives and proxies; the law-giver is not present as such, nor is the law itself; but they are revealed through examples. Sometimes these examples or repetitions are good, an aid to knowledge, sometimes they are bad, a ‘dangerous supplement.’

If *différance is* (crossed out) some kind of origin, what is its relation to these repetitions, proxies and delegates? Does Derrida reverse the model of *adequatio*, expanding on his insights into Hegelian and Husserlian phenomenology to show that repetition, supplementation, and so forth, play a constitutive role in determining *what is*? Does this mean that for Derrida *what is* is actually produced, secondary, derived, and as such can no longer be *what is*? Is an original produced then by its copy, its imitation and repetition? If so, does *différance* provide a different model for the relation of *adequatio*, but one which is a model nonetheless? Does this conform to what Habermas calls Derrida’s “fanaticism” with all that is secondary and derived? And what then becomes the place of the example or repetition in Derrida’s work? This thesis will be specifically concerned with these questions throughout, and I do not intend to answer them all here. But I do want to give a sense of the ways in which Derrida’s interrogation of the concept of origin, the transcendental, and the name ‘God,’ lead to Derrida’s reconsideration of the roles of repetition, and specifically *mimesis* as a form of repetition, in the constitution of some of philosophy’s most dominant concepts or

philosophemes. This thesis will explore in what ways the relation of the origin to proxies and delegates, the structures of representation and revelation, changes under Derrida's handling of this concept or nonconcept, and the impact this has on the concept of the origin itself.

The Law: A Legitimate Fiction?

The first question I want to ask then, is whether *différance* possesses a law-giving capacity, the power to prescribe and to legitimate? In order to go about answering this, it needs to be understood what 'law' means. And here is the first snag; to ask '*what is the law?*' is to ask precisely the kind of question that Derrida deconstructs, for it assumes that there is an essence or stable identity which can be uncovered. For Derrida, rather than simply ask *what is the law*, what must be interrogated is this philosophical assumption of essence, for this takes on the role of foundation or bedrock, becoming a kind of law of the law: the *what is* of law. Rather than simply accept this state of affairs, Derrida seeks to go right to the heart of the question itself, to ask something like 'what is essence (what is the *what is*) such that it can be asked *what is the law?*' And to set about responding to this, he asks what might be considered some more 'traditional' questions: where does the law come from, what is its origin or source? What demarcates it from non-law? What grants it its identity, and indeed what is that identity?

Margaret Davies also asks these questions in her essay 'Derrida and Law: Legitimate fictions.'¹¹ She argues that legal philosophy, and philosophy in general, has had to respond to this question of the law's legitimation, of what makes it law. Simply claiming itself as law "is nothing more than a parental 'because I say so' translated into a constitutional mandate" (Cohen, 2001, 213), and so philosophy has had to come up with something a bit more substantial, a source of authority and legitimacy, a 'law of law.' Philosophy thus looks for the rules of rules. But this leads to a potentially infinite regress. And while this "must stop at some point, [...] it does not stop at a place where we can be satisfied that we have reached a

¹¹ This essay is one of a collection in *Jacques Derrida and the Humanities: A Critical Reader*, ed. Tom Cohen (2001, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge).

rational origin, or an origin which clearly demarcates the inside from the outside of law. It is just there, an assumption or premise which can be subject to no further scrutiny” (Cohen, 2001, 216). In order to establish what might play the role of this ‘origin’ in Derrida’s work, Davies ties together the legal theory of Hans Kelsen with a quotation from Montaigne which Derrida cites at the beginning of his essay ‘Before the Law.’¹² Kelson, in his attempt to find a basic principle which authorises all law, travelled down the road of norms, each validating the preceding norm, until he hit bedrock. But this bedrock was not the answer as such, merely an impasse, a first law which could be referred back to no other and which therefore resembled the ‘because I say so.’ Kelson’s solution to this was to propose

a ‘basic norm,’ which he described variously as a hypothesis, a presupposition, and finally as a fiction. In itself, Kelson’s basic norm is neither valid nor invalid: it cannot be valid because there is no further place to ask questions about validity, and it cannot be invalid because it is itself the source of all validity. It is beyond questions about validity. [...] it is a fiction, or rather a ‘proper’ fiction, because it contradicts reality (it does not exist as law, but is merely a conceptual construct), and because it contradicts itself (as authoritative of law but not itself authorized in a way which would give it this authority) (Cohen, 2001, 216-7).

Derrida too refers to legitimate fictions, citing Montaigne: “our law, it is said, has legitimate fictions on which it bases the truth of its justice” (A, 183). In what way might the law of law be a fiction for Derrida? Does, as Davies suggests, the legitimate fiction fulfil this aporia of legal authority? The answer to this seems to lie in Derrida’s essay ‘Before the law,’ in which he recounts Kafka’s tale of the same title. In Kafka’s story, a man goes to the gate of the law to ask for admittance, only to be told always by the gatekeeper ‘not yet.’ Entry is not forbidden, but is always deferred, and, since the gate was made only for this man, always different. The man cannot see or question the law. Indeed, as Davies points out, the only way to question the law is through the very channels the law itself lays down (Cohen, 2001, 219), here through the gatekeeper who prohibits and defers such questioning.

¹² Jacques Derrida, ‘Before the Law,’ trans. Avital Ronell appears in a collection of Derrida’s essays in *Acts of Literature*, Ed. Derek Attridge (1992, Routledge, New York). Henceforth, the title *Acts of Literature* is abbreviated as A.

Now, as is often the case with Derrida's work, his response to the question of legal authority *seems* to go off at a tangent, here to the question of literature. His first point of interest is in what makes Kafka's story a story, a fiction? But this is no tangent, for the answer is a law, a law of genre that says 'this is a literary fiction.' So a law dictates that this story of law is a fiction. But what then is the origin of this law of genre, this law of law? This origin of law cannot be identified. Kafka's man cannot reach the law; it remains concealed, hidden, prohibited. Indeed, Kafka's story is the tale of this concealment, in which what is revealed is the concealment itself. So "[i]t seems that the law as such should never give rise to any story. To be invested with its categorical authority, the law must be without history, genesis, or any possible derivation. That would be the *law of the law*." Stories are at best only "the modes of its revelation" (A, 191).

So the story of the law is not the law itself, the law is not present in it. What is present-ed or revealed is its prohibition, its concealment. This concealment is, Derrida says, the law of the law. Derrida is marking out an extremely complex relation here, one which he identifies again in Hegel's relation between absolute religion and absolute knowledge.¹³ It is a relation that is absolutely bound up with questions of presentation and representation. The 'law of law' is that the law, the origin of law, should not be presented *as such*. But this 'law of law' can be presented, revealed, represented. The 'law of law,' in other words, the prohibition of the presentation of the law, the prescription of concealment, can be presented. The law then, is both present and absent; the law itself is not present, but the 'law of law,' the law of concealment and prohibition is presented. But it is only present as a representation, since the law cannot be present. This representation, the fictional story, is thus an example, an example that is subject to a law that says that the truth of such an example is that it is a fiction. The law of genre thus dictates that this story of the law of law is a fiction in which the law itself remains inaccessible because it is only ever accessible through fictions which are not the law

¹³ This play of revelation and concealment in the relation between absolute religion and absolute knowledge will be the subject of much of this thesis.

itself. The origin of law is, as Derrida says in *Of Grammatology*, a law.¹⁴ And what can never be reached is this law itself.

What remains concealed and invisible in each law is [...] the law itself, that which makes laws of these laws, the being-law of these laws. The question and the quest are ineluctable, rendering irresistible the journey toward the place and the origin of law. The law yields by withholding itself, without imparting its providence and its site. This silence and discontinuity constitute the phenomenon of the law (A, 192).

Silence: the law dictates without saying a word. Its representative (the gatekeeper) speaks on its behalf, but says nothing of the law itself, only of its delay and deferral. Discontinuity: the law works through paradoxes which are a condition for it; one must not question the law, yet the law is universal, it should be accessible to all and open to interrogation; law is truth yet only accessible through fiction; the law is *what is*, yet never presents itself as such, available only through representations, repetitions. The law itself prescribes such discontinuity, that one interrupt relations with the law in order to relate to the law.

Such would be the terrifying double-bind of its own taking-place. It is prohibition: this does not mean that it prohibits, but that it is itself prohibited, a prohibited place. It forbids itself and contradicts itself by placing the man in its own contradiction: one cannot reach the law, and in order to have a *rapport* of respect with it, *one must not* have a *rapport* with the law, *one must interrupt the relation*. One must *enter into relation* only with the law's representatives, its examples, its guardians. And these are interrupters as well as messengers (A, 204).

The law prescribes the prohibited story of its birth as a story of its own prohibition, of prohibited access to an event that never took place: "The law, intolerant of its own history, intervenes as an absolutely emergent order, absolute and detached from any origin" (A, 194). The law of law claims itself to be absolutely original: it is, as Derrida describes elsewhere, *always already*. Like the father in Freud's *Totem and Taboo* to which Derrida also refers, the law has all the more power for its absence. Murdered or absent in the finite 'here and now,' it has infinite presence. The law has no beginning, no event in history marks its eruption, yet it is by way of this that philosophy grants it an absolute beginning, an absolute origin that as

¹⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1976, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore), 265. Henceforth, the title *Of Grammatology* is abbreviated as OG.

absolute is concealed and accessible only through representations, delegates, examples. Cut off from all that would give it a genealogical heritage, make it derivative or produced, it emerges as *what is*, purely original: “the law remains inaccessible; and if this forbids or bars the gate to genealogical history, it also fuels desire for the origin and genealogical drive, which wear themselves out as much before the process of the law’s engenderment as before parental generation” (A, 197). Philosophy proclaims the law’s originality through the very absence of its origin.

But Derrida puts a different slant on this absence. This purely original origin does not exist somewhere; indeed, it never existed. Rather, the law exists only through what it issues; it *is* to the extent that it produces itself in the production of examples. And this ‘issuing’ must be rethought. The origin does not produce its representations. Rather, since the origin does not exist *as such*, it is produced by these representations. These representations are produced *by the absence* of the origin, rather than by the origin itself. These representations then *produce* the origin since the concept of causality dictates that they surely must have been produced *by something*. So that for Derrida, the concept of the origin has a complex ‘*fort da*’ relation with representation. The law or origin is not somewhere, hidden, waiting to be found, sending out representations in its place. The law *is* (crossed out) *différance*, this play between absence and presence:

what is deferred forever till death is entry into the law itself, which is nothing other than that which dictates the delay. The law prohibits by interfering with and deferring the “ference”, the reference, the rapport, the relation. What must not be approached is the origin of *différance*: it must not be presented or represented and above all not penetrated. This is the law of the law, the process of a law of whose subject we can never say, ‘There it is,’ it is here or there. [...] it never reaches the depths of its original and proper taking-place. [...] It is always cryptic; that is, it is a secret [...]. The secret is nothing – and this is the secret that has to be kept well, nothing either present or presentable, but this nothing must be well kept (A, 205).

The law has no essence; it *is* only its *différance* to itself, a play of deferral and difference, of delegates, representatives and examples. But what issues such representatives “*is not there*”

^A
(205). What the ‘law of law,’ the representation and the gatekeeper all guard is the guarding itself: “Like truth, the law would be the guarding itself, only the guarding” ^A (206). Reference to the law is reference only to the guarding of the non-existent secret. This is what Derrida calls the relation “without-relation” (A, 209). The relation or reference to the law is there, but suspended, since what is being related to is not there. What is left is the relation itself, this play of *différance*, of delay and deferral, the ‘ference’ with nothing at the end of it. To seek the origin of law, the law of law, is in the end to seek nothing. But this is how the law promises and maintains itself, through the arousal of desire for the origin and the denial of fulfilment. Prohibition keeps the law alive: “Is not what holds us in check before the law [...] also what paralyzes [...]: is it not its possibility and its impossibility, its readability and its unreadability, its necessity and its prohibition, and the questions of relation, of repetition and of history?” (A, 196).

The ‘law of law’ for Derrida is that there is no law, but rather a ‘fiction’ that holds its place, guarding what is not there. The origin exists only to the extent that it is repeated, and in this way the story of the law is indeed a fiction, the myth of an original presence from which all laws spring. The law repeats itself through examples but there is no original as such. Fiction thus tells the truth of the law, a truth which, since it is a fiction, cannot be the truth of the law. Fiction here does not offer some kind of dialectical resolution in which law is the truth of fiction. Rather, fiction is *before the law*, a repetition that comes *before* the law, makes the ‘law of law’ possible, *and* impossible. And this is where the philosophical engages its difficult relation with literature; the law *ought* to be universal, but in truth only emerges through “singular performance,” “when the categorical engages the idiomatic, as a literature always must” (A, 213). This singularity does not prevent the universality of the law; rather, it is a condition of possibility, *and* thus also impossibility, for it. The law of law, the *de jure* of law, is possible only when it engages with the *de facto*: “The man from the country had difficulty in grasping that the entrance was singular or unique when it should have been universal, as in truth it was. He had difficulty with literature” (A, 213).

The Law of Genre

'Before the law' is a complex text. However, it does raise some difficulties that are pertinent to what will be examined in the remainder of this study. Firstly, the concept of causality is put into doubt. The origin is not the source of law but is produced by that which it does *and* (therefore) does not produce. That which would legitimate all other laws is produced by them, and so the notion of grounds, foundations or a 'law or law' can no longer function as a last reference or what Derrida calls a 'transcendental signified.' Indeed, the relationship between reference and referent, alongside the very concept of relation itself, begin to unravel. The 'relation-without-relation' marks out this structure.

It is not only the relation between the origin and (its) productions that begins to blur. The relation between philosophy and literature also starts to appear increasingly tangled. Philosophy is shown to depend on that which it would prefer to exclude from itself; it needs the stories it tells and these stories can no longer simply be bracketed off as external to the truth they 'transport.' The idiomatic is necessary to the essential, which means that the essential must be in a relation of reciprocity or contamination with what is supposedly inessential. Another example of this relationship between philosophy and literature is to be found in the relation between the preface and the supposed main body of the philosophical text. I will explore this relation more thoroughly in Chapter One, but from Derrida's reading of the law there is a glimpse of what he means by "the preface is a fiction" (D, 36). The preface is an addition, an extra that attaches itself to the book of philosophy, often for didactic or formalist reasons. It doesn't really belong to philosophy, but is a kind of fictive addition, a story that introduces the truth. In this case, fiction is working in the service of truth: "fiction in the service of meaning, truth is (the truth of) fiction, the fictive arranges itself on a hierarchy, it itself negates and dissipates itself as accessory to the concept." But as Chapter One will show, by both belonging and not belonging in this way, the addition cannot be contained by the law to which it ought to submit; the concept of 'addition' becomes a fiction. This extra produces something extra such that "fiction affirms itself as a simulacrum and, through the work of this

textual feint, disorganizes all the oppositions to which the teleology of the book ought violently to have subordinated it” (D, 36). The preface can only function as it ought for so long as its fictionality remains in place and at the same time concealed. Once it breaks free of these philosophical moorings then it has the power to disrupt the very law that ought to govern it.¹⁵

This relationship between the preface and philosophy focuses many of the problematics Derrida raises with regard to ‘how things ought to be in the normal course of things.’ It indicates, for example, some limitations of speech act theory. Habermas would have it that fiction has no place in philosophical discourse, or at the very least that its place, just as Hegel maintains, ought to remain outside, as an introduction, a story to get things going. Thus the fictive should remain separate from the nonfictive, the normal from the abnormal, and so forth. But the preface begins to undo these oppositions. Firstly, both fiction and philosophy share a common ground. They are both ‘writing’ in Derrida’s expanded sense, a ‘bundle’ of traces that retain the other in the same, which gain their possibility from the relays of differences and deferrals. Their identities are produced out of this textual generality. They are the same that is not identical. In addition, the possibility of separating genres also implies the possibility of their contamination. If an accident is always possible, it can no longer be a purely contingent event, but must belong in some way to the identity of the proper. Similarly, the normal can no longer simply demarcate itself from the abnormal, the fictive from the truthful, the proper from the non-proper.

This however, no matter what Habermas might say, does not mean that Derrida wants to conflate philosophy and literature. I will elaborate on their relation shortly, but before that I want to expand on contamination. This can perhaps be better understood in the context of Derrida’s reading of the law of genre. In order to separate fact from fiction, texts must bear a mark which says to which genre they belong. The concept of genres implies a limit, a law of

¹⁵ Derrida writes in ‘The Double Session’ of a “fiction that is not imaginary” (D, 211). Understood in this way, *différance* perhaps is a fiction, the illegitimate brother of the legitimate fiction of reason.

demarcation. A novel, for example, must satisfy the criterion which make it belong to the category or genre of literature or fiction. It must signal its belonging, and, Derrida says, this mark is a matter of mention as well as use. Whether or not the author intends to mark the genre, whether or not such marking is explicit, whether it is thematic or non-thematic, all texts must bear the mark of belonging. But, Derrida says in 'The Law of Genre,' this mark itself does not belong.¹⁶ The "re-mark of belonging" that says 'this is fiction' is not itself a fiction; it does not belong to the genre in which it is at work (A, 230). It is absent from the category it defines, present in the category to which it does not belong. So that for Derrida, the law of genre is a law of contamination, a law of impurity, a parasitical economy. As Davies puts it, "[e]mbedded in the law of genre, therefore, is another law, a law which is at once present and absent, same and other, and it is this 'law of impurity' which engendered the very possibility of law, of genre, of taxonomy. Without this impure law to determine what is purely law, there would be no law" (Cohen, 2001, 220-21). Identity is thus dependent upon contamination.

I want to take stock of what has been learned from 'Before the Law' and 'The Law of Genre.' Firstly, it is possible to begin to build a picture of what the law, and its relation to the origin (and so the concept of origin itself) might mean for Derrida. The origin of the law, its eruption, does not take place. As Geoffrey Bennington says, such an event

depended on a radical fiction to take place, or rather, for such an event cannot take place, to produce after the fact the fiction of its having-taken-place. This structure implies that the law is made in an illegality, in a moment when it is outside the law, beside itself, and that it remains marked by this fact: it is the law of the law that it cannot found its own legality in itself or state its own title without getting outside itself to tell a story about the event of its origin, to which however it ought to remain indifferent (Bennington, 1993, 246).

The origin of law is not only a fiction (a bit like the preface that is written after the fact but which comes before the truth), but also (and *because* it is a fiction and ought to be a fact) a contamination, a rupture that parts law from non-law, and through the act of this parting,

¹⁶ Jacques Derrida, 'The Law of Genre,' trans. Avital Ronell (*Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge, 1992, Routledge, New York).

decides and declares itself as law. So the law is born of an act, a violent act Derrida says in 'Force of Law,' that cannot itself be law, unless of course, it engages once again with the infinite regress that says this rupture was a moment of law which was a moment of law. Once again, this would simply point back in the direction of an absolute exteriority, God for example, which just leads back to the abyss the 'law of law' was trying to broach. And so the law of law cannot remark itself except in the example; it is singular, idiomatic; only in that way can it presuppose a relation to a generality it forges in the very act of presupposition.

This structure thus problematises the concept of the origin in general, showing up a certain complicity in the relation between producer and produced. The linear model of causality, with the origin as an absent source which produces laws is philosophy's 'law of law.' But for Derrida, the origin is no longer simply a producer, since it is produced (a production which is ongoing) by what repeats it. It does not exist without these repetitions, these examples and representations. Derrida calls this elsewhere "the supplement of origin: which supplements the failing origin and which is yet not derived; this supplement is, as one says of a spare part, of the original make" (OG, 313). But since the origin *is* (an *is* that can no longer be thought of as an essence) *différance*, it is this *différance* (of the origin to itself) that has produced these repetitions, and so in another sense the origin is productive, productive of what produces it. As such then, Derrida doesn't simply reverse the producer-produced relation. What he questions is the concept of the origin as a pure presence, which issues forth the example, the law, or the representation, and through doing so maintains itself as an absolute, and more powerful, presence. Rather than this pure presence, for Derrida it is *différance*, this tension between presence and absence, the original and the representation, that is productive, and at the same time, produced. *Différance* then, is not productive in any simple sense. It is produced as much as it produces, passive as much as active. Indeed, as the same that is not identical, it is *prior* to such oppositions. It precedes the oppositions of identity and nonidentity, but cannot be thought of as a source since it only exists *between* these oppositions.

In the case of law then, the origin of law too must be subject to this law-non-law of the origin. It is a law-non-law of contamination, of impurity as a condition of possibility and thus impossibility for purity, of non-identity as the possibility and impossibility of identity. And what occupies the position of a condition here is both inside and outside of the law. Inside the law: *différance* is subject to *différance*, is *différant* to itself (has no self-identity since it is *différant*). Outside the law: since the law, as *différant*, has no ideal unity, no absolute integrity or homogeneity, moments of *différance* cannot belong to ‘*Différance*’ as members belong to a set. There is no set to belong to, so it must always in this sense be outside of itself, outside its own inside. (Once again, this is something I will come back to.) The mark of belonging thus occupies what Derrida calls in *Glas* the ‘transcendental ex-position.’¹⁷ It is both inside and outside of the law, both of law and non-law, both a condition of possibility *and* impossibility for law.

In ‘Before the Law’ and ‘The Law of Genre’ Derrida shows that there is no origin of law issuing laws like a god commanding its messengers. Law is contaminated with non-law, and this contamination is a condition of possibility and impossibility. The law does not exist outside of this contamination: the possibility of a transcendental ‘law of law’ is dependent upon its *de facto* representations, upon exemplarity, reference with no referent, and so forth. As such, repetition is a condition of possibility for the law of law, for the transcendental; but it is also a condition of impossibility since repetition always entails deferral and difference which in turn means that the transcendental can no longer be absolutely self-identical and therefore no longer simply transcendental. It is compromised, but such compromise is a condition for it. As Bennington says, “[t]here is no law in general except of a repetition, and there is no repetition that is not subjected to a law” (Bennington, 1993, 239, and D, 123). So the law

¹⁷Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, trans. John P. Leavey Jr. & Richard Rand (1986, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London), 162. Henceforth, the title *Glas* is abbreviated as G.

doesn't simply exist somewhere; the transcendental is dependent on what should be subordinate to it, repetition, delay and deferral.

The Law-non-Law of Différance

Différance, for Derrida, is not merely something that happens once the system is up and running; it is not applied to secure concepts in order to make them insecure. It is a condition of possibility and impossibility for the system of philosophy, for the concepts of law and origin, for the concept of the concept itself. However, this then appears to lead right back to the criticisms that Habermas levelled at Derrida: this talk of conditions of possibility and impossibility, of différance as transcendental or as the non-originary origin, still sounds as if différance is a deeper and more profound origin, one which functions as a condition for the concept of the origin, for the transcendental, for the law, and so on. My initial question was whether différance could act as a law-giver, prescribing and legitimating the rules or strategy, the 'blind tactics,' of deconstruction. So far it has been shown that Derrida deconstructs the concept of law, suggesting that there is no origin of law and no pure law, *as such*. Through this deconstruction, the concept of the origin is also rearticulated in a framework which it can no longer produce and govern. Now, if there is no origin of law, if the non-origin of law can no longer govern the law, then the parallel question of whether différance can prescribe the rules of or to deconstruction (that is, the very possibility of the question) becomes problematic. So Derrida appears to have undercut the foundationalist capacity of origins, and so of différance. Différance cannot be foundational since the very concepts of foundations and of origins have been problematised. The origin is produced as much as productive, governed as much as governing, bound by laws of repetition, spacing and deferral. It can no longer be the first or last word in philosophy.

But is this enough to refute Habermas's argument? Simply because this non-originary origin (différance) is now, as Habermas says, vacillating or oscillating, does this necessarily mean

that it cannot function as a grounding foundational (non)concept? For it is *différance* that has undercut the foundationalist capacity of *différance*. And if it is *différance* that has undermined the concept of origins and foundations, does this not merely confirm that *différance* has pushed one level deeper? If *différance* problematises the origin, makes it *différant*, is *différance* thus more profound, more originary, than this origin? If the law-non-law of *différance* is a condition of possibility and impossibility that *precedes* identity and non-identity, purity and impurity, presence and absence, does this mean that it becomes or replaces the more traditional concepts of the transcendental, becoming as it were, transcendental to the transcendental?

Difference as Transcendental: Peter Dews

Now Habermas actually does not refer to conditions of possibility and impossibility (a crucial omission since it is the impossibility that needs to be remembered as much as possibility). Habermas's argument turns on archewriting and *différance*, but he offers little explanation of these terms and does not refer to Derrida's writing on them in any expanded sense. A more thorough understanding of them is offered by Peter Dews in *Logics of Disintegration*.¹⁸ Dews, like Habermas, sees Derrida's deconstruction simply as an attempt to make *différance* a more originary origin, and all the more transcendental. So that while Derrida questions the concept of origin and "challenges the idea that *différance* or the trace could be considered an origin" he does so "*only* insofar as he considers the concept of origin to be inseparable from that of presence" (Dews, 1987, 25). For Dews, *différance* has a law-giving role, providing what might be thought of as a homogenous concept of heterogeneity. To back this up, Dews offers a reading of Derrida's examination of Husserl. Derrida showed that Husserl's phenomenological project breaks down because he has to concede that the transcendental is dependent upon writing, that the essential must be contaminated with the empirical. But, says Dews, this does not lead Derrida to soften the line between the empirical and transcendental.

¹⁸ Peter Dews, *Logics of Disintegration: Post-Structuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory* (1987, Verso, London & New York).

For Derrida the possibility that empirical facts could have any status other than that of examples “contradicts the very premiss of phenomenology” which is that “essential insight *de jure* precedes every material historical investigation” (Dews, 1987, 17). Husserl’s failure does not reveal to Derrida that the “transcendental project is inherently suspect” but that ‘différance would be transcendental.’

In other words, for Derrida the permanent evidential gap within phenomenology itself, which *appears* to be the result of the intrusion of facticity and historicity, is the effect of a transcendental structure more fundamental than that of consciousness (Dews, 1987, 18).

This transcendental structure is *différance*. Rather than move downstream towards an account of subjectivity as emerging from and intertwined with the natural and historical world, Derrida swims further upstream in a quest for the ground of transcendental consciousness itself: *différance* produces the transcendental subject, older than presence and the transcendental reduction.

For Dews, just as for Habermas, Derrida has not abandoned transcendental aspirations, merely shifted the playing field. Dews finds this confirmed in Derrida’s claim that the procedure of deconstruction is “one of moving ‘beyond’, rather than falling short of, transcendental criticism, to the level of what he explicitly terms an ‘ultra-transcendental text’ ” (Dews, 1987, 24). Derrida acknowledges that this ultra-transcendental so resembles the pre-critical text as to be almost indistinguishable from it, but he “believes that the beyond can be barred from returning to the within [...] by what he terms a ‘track in the text’”. But this track can only be the mark of speculation: Derrida, in other words, is offering us a philosophy of *différance* as absolute” (Dews, 1987, 24). This track then, which Derrida thinks will prevent the deconstructive text from being a mere repetition of the speculative text, is says Dews, a mark of speculation. The track shows how deconstruction has had to engage with, in order to move beyond, metaphysics. I take this to mean that for Dews Derrida’s use of terms ‘under erasure’

is a bit like Hegel's *Aufhebung*,¹⁹ these finite terms being incapable of grasping absolute *différance in itself*. And as a result, Derrida is only able to characterise *différance* through a series of negations.

Since the finitude and discursivity of thought renders it *in principle* incapable of attaining the absolute, an unclosable gap opens between the *claim* of philosophy and its possible performance. If the absolute is unknowable, then the task of philosophy becomes nothing other than the explication of this unknowability itself. In a similar manner, Derrida is concerned with the unthinkability of *différance*, with the incessant attempt to turn back language against itself, and with the necessary failure of that attempt (Dews, 1987, 26).

The ability to think 'différance' fails because *différance* is absolute. For *différance* cannot be defined in its opposition to identity since Derrida claims it to be the non-originary origin of identity. It can only be defined through negation. But, says Dews, if *différance* cannot stand in opposition to presence and identity, neither can it differ from them, which means that *différance is identity*. For if it were to be maintained that *différance* differs from identity, it could not differ absolutely since all determinate *différences* are internal to *différance*. Absolute *différance* collapses into absolute identity. Inasmuch as the same is not identical, so the nonidentical must be the same (Dews, 1987, 30).

For Dews, "Derrida has still not escaped the 'idea of the first' even though this first cannot take the form of presence" (Dews, 1987, 40). This 'first' becomes "the generative ground of identity" (Dews, 1987, 42). In the end, *différance* is an absolute, and deconstruction is speculative. Like Habermas, Dews believes that Derrida is swapping the authority – the originating and legitimating capacity – of the transcendental and of the origin for *différance*. This *différance* is determined as absolute, another name for God, and this is why deconstruction can only approach it negatively (just as negative theology approaches its God). Like Kafka's man at the gate, we too are prevented from reaching this origin of origins. So

¹⁹ See also, for example, Kevin Thompson's essay 'Hegelian Dialectic and the Quasi-transcendental in *Glas*' in which Thompson argues the "deep affinity" between *différance* and the *Aufhebung* (*Hegel After Derrida*, ed. Stuart Barnett, 1998, Routledge, New York), 239.

that, according to Thomas McCarthy, Derrida wants to have it both ways; deconstruction relies on the terms of metaphysics, on terms of identity, even if under erasure, in a bid to undermine those concepts.²⁰ It does not do away with the transcendental, but relies upon it as a stepping stone to reach the even more transcendental, and even more inarticulable, *différance*. Dews's first point then, is that Derrida maintains oppositions (such as transcendental/empirical) in order to overcome them in *différance*, which then becomes the ultimate term of the relation. He cannot articulate this *différance* without recourse to these positive terms.

But Dews is also making another point; if the same is not identical, then the nonidentical is the same. While Derrida wants to prioritise nonidentity over identity, to make nonidentity the identity of nonidentity and identity, this cannot logically succeed. Moreover, Derrida seeks to make this nonidentical *différance* transcendental by maintaining the distinction between the empirical and the transcendental, rather than by accepting the contamination that elsewhere he espouses. *Not only is Derrida replacing the origin or the transcendental with différence, but he has also got this différence wrong.* Absolute *différance* is absolute identity, for Derrida cannot logically prioritise this *différance* over identity. Manfred Frank shares a similar view: *différance* must always be partial otherwise it could never be distinguished from indifference or identity, and its nonidentical aspects cannot be favoured over its identical aspects since it must have something in common with what it differs from, otherwise the terms difference and identity have no meaning or cogency.²¹

For all these thinkers, Derrida makes *différance* into a transcendental foundation that can only be thought by negating the positive terms of metaphysics which it would like to claim are derived from (out of) this *différance*. And, as I shall show in a moment, it is not only

²⁰ Thomas McCarthy, *Ideals and Illusions: On Reconstruction and Deconstruction in Contemporary Critical Theory* (1991, The MIT Press, Massachusetts), 108.

²¹ Manfred Frank, *What is Neostructuralism?* (1989, Minnesota University Press, Minneapolis), 432. David Wood ('*Différance* and the Problem of Strategy' in *Derrida and Différance*, Wood & Bernasconi, 1988) makes a similar point.

deconstruction's detractors that claim Derrida sounds too transcendental. Whatever the personal agendas of these thinkers may be, it is clear that deconstruction must respond to this question of whether it maintains philosophical concepts (concepts of identity or the identity of concepts) in order to break them down (into non-identity) and thus whether the non-identity of *différance* can really be said to 'precede' identity since deconstruction depends upon that identity. Whilst Derrida is accused by Habermas of blurring certain philosophical distinctions (such as that between philosophy and literature), does he at the same time work hard to maintain others (such as that between the transcendental and the empirical)? Is *différance* as the non-originary origin really prior to the identity of the concept of origin, and is Derrida trying to make it transcendental?

I want to mark out this problematic by looking at the work of Richard Rorty and Rodolphe Gasché.²² Both think that the early Derrida is making something like transcendental claims for *différance*, but both view these claims differently and seek to defend Derrida on the basis of those views. Gasché sees the transcendental Derrida, or to be more precise, what he terms the quasi-transcendental Derrida, in a positive light, and he does not think that quasi-transcendental argumentation stops where Derrida's more 'idiosyncratic' style begins. In contrast, Richard Rorty's defence of Derrida against the accusations of transcendentalism takes the form of showing Derrida's more literary, playful side. For Rorty, what he terms the 'early' Derrida, the more transcendental Derrida, was a bit of a blip which was overcome when Derrida started his more private, fantastic, and ironic writing. In the style of an *Aufhebung* between early and late, the latter wins out as the truth of the former, and the truth of Derrida. Indeed, Rorty is in favour of this process of the *Aufhebung*, which he sees Derrida utilise not only in his overcoming of metaphysics and metaphysical constraints (such as the need to

²² As I mentioned earlier, it can be seen here how certain readings lead to other readings, and how misreadings lead to other misreadings. For example, Rorty's reading of Derrida takes its stance as a counter-reading to Gasché's Derrida, while Habermas's criticisms of Derrida take much of their force from his reading of Rorty. Indeed, in Habermas's work it would be hard to know which or whose 'original' text he is seeking to interrogate.

argue), but also in the overcoming of his own more Kantian tendencies in favour of his Hegelian ones. One of the problems with all this is that in his defence of Derrida Rorty ends up sounding a bit like Habermas, which is not without irony since Habermas's arguments against Derrida often rely on his reading of Rorty. And again, in *The Tain of the Mirror* Gasché ends up sounding as though he supports Habermas' viewpoint of a foundationalist Derrida when he claims that the "source of all being beyond being is *generalized*, or rather *general*, writing, whose essential nontruth and nonpresence is the fundamentally undecidable condition of possibility and impossibility of presence in its identity and of identity in its presence. The 'source' of being and beingness is, for Derrida, the system or chain beyond being of the various infrastructures or 'undecidables'."²³

The Trouble with Arguing: Richard Rorty

As such, both Rorty's and Gasché's engagements with deconstruction are more complicated than first appearances might suggest. I want to begin with Rorty. Rorty and Derrida are co-defendants in the court of Habermas, and he is a defender of Derrida against the transcendental claims made by Gasché and Norris. But he is also Derrida's accuser, sounding a bit Habermasian when he pits the early Derrida against the later, superior model. This developmental theory is most explicitly articulated in 'Philosophy as a Kind of Writing: An Essay on Derrida,' although it is a persistent echo in much of his work on Derrida.²⁴ The problem, as Rorty sees it, is that the 'early' Derrida is overly argumentative. On the one hand this puts Rorty *against* Habermas for whom Derrida is never argumentative enough. Yet on the other hand, this puts him *with* Habermas in distinguishing between philosophy and literature, in seeing argumentation and problem-solving as diametrically opposed to the literary style of a Derrida more concerned with world-disclosure. Rorty at once both demarcates

²³ Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (1986, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts), 177.

²⁴ Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1982, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis).

problem-solving from world-disclosure, and simultaneously conflates them by viewing the philosophical activity of deconstruction as resembling literary activity.

Many critics, as well as Derrida himself, have responded negatively to Rorty's division of Derrida's work into early and later, public and private, problem-solving and world-disclosure.²⁵ Indeed, Rorty admits in a later text that he perhaps did make too much of the distinction between early and late in his own earlier work (Mouffe, 1996, 41). But such a distinction is more than a desire for philosophy to behave a bit like literature. Rorty prefers Derrida when he behaves more like Hegel than Kant, when he becomes master of the *Aufhebung* and stops trying to 'generalise' conditions of possibility and impossibility. In one sense then, Rorty gets around the questions posed by Dews, Habermas, and co., by claiming that this was just something the early Derrida did. And it is true that perhaps in some of his later texts (although I'm not exactly sure where the distinction between early and late would lie, but *Glas*, *The Postcard*, some elements of *Dissemination* seem to mark the divide) Derrida does appear to be more interested in the performative rather than the constative.²⁶ For Rorty, Derrida moves from being a public liberal to a private ironist, from a Kantian who likes to argue about things (thus assuming that he knows what he is arguing about and has a language that is stable enough with which to argue) to someone who becomes more Hegelian, more interested in world-disclosure, in private ironising and fantasising, in multiplying language games with no view to resolving Kantian-style questions of the relation between appearance

²⁵ See for example, Derrida's essay 'Remarks on Deconstruction and Pragmatism' in *Deconstruction and Pragmatism*, ed. Chantelle Mouffe (1996, Routledge, London & New York), 78-80. This collection of essays is a record of a symposium in which Richard Rorty and Derrida responded to questions and criticisms posed by Simon Critchley and Ernesto Laclau.

²⁶ Simon Critchley contests Rorty's public-private/early-late distinction, seeing instead changes "in the mode of presentation" which moves away from "formulating a theoretico-historico-interpretative grid" to "a form of textual *enactment*" (Mouffe, 1996, 31). But as Critchley says, this more "performative" style is not confined to the later texts ("the closer one looks, the harder it is to find any substantial difference between earlier and later work") and that moreover, Derrida seems to have returned to a more public form of writing in his most recent texts, "moving towards a practice of deconstruction as a series of quasi-phenomeneological micrologies that are concerned with the particular *qua* particular, that is to say, with the grain and the enigmatic detail of everyday life." (Mouffe, 1996, 32). Critchley also raises the valid question of from what point of view Rorty might be viewing the Kant-Hegel heritage, since he is critical of just this kind of totalising unilateral history. "Is Rorty's not a God's eye-view on the impossibility of a God's eye-view?" (Mouffe, 1996, 37)

and reality, between representation and the represented, between language and truth. For Rorty then, the whole question of whether Derrida is a philosopher of origins with transcendental urges hinges on whether Derrida has arguments or not.

Rorty follows Ernst Tugendhat in his definition of argument. He claims that argumentation has to be propositional; it can only be about the truth or meaning of propositions. And Rorty (in his article 'Is Derrida a Transcendental Philosopher?'²⁷) identifies two major flaws with this kind of propositional discourse. Either it depends upon the assumption that the language used to argue is antecedently given and stable, which contrasts with Rorty's Derrida whose aim is to cast doubt on all forms of final vocabulary; or it treats argumentation as a disposable ladder-language which can be left behind when *aufgehoben*, thus suggesting that such discourse was never truly argumentative, merely a way of speaking differently that could be disposed of once it had served its purpose.

As such, the claim that is central to Gasché's work, that Derrida can move from the propositional to the pre-propositional level (*différance*) which would provide the conditions of possibility and impossibility for the propositional, and that one could claim some sort of cognitive status for such a manoeuvre, is, according to Rorty, a misunderstanding of the nature of argumentation. He believes that in order to argue one must use the same language in one's propositions as one does in one's conclusions. To move to the pre-propositional in order to argue against the propositional isn't arguing, it is a new way of talking about things, a new language game. Derrida is, for Rorty, at his worst when he is engaged with this search for the pre-propositional, when he continues the Heideggerian project of seeking

words which express the conditions of possibility of all previous theory – all of metaphysics and all earlier attempts to undercut metaphysics, including Heidegger's. On this reading, Derrida wants to undercut Heidegger as Heidegger undercut

²⁷ In *Working through Derrida*, ed. Gary B. Madison (1993, Northwestern University Press, Evanston).

Nietzsche. Yet his project is continuous with Heidegger's in that he, too, wants to find words which have force apart from us and display their own contingency.²⁸

Rorty does not believe in arguing against previous systems. He thinks that deconstruction can be overly concerned with "questioning, problematizing and *mettant-en-abime*" (Mouffe, 1996, 44). Rorty prefers to stick to what he describes as the more Deweyan-pragmatic practice of 'if it isn't broken don't fix it' and 'if it is broken then don't fix it, get a new one.' As he says, "[t]he result of genuinely original thought is not so much to refute or subvert our previous beliefs as to help us forget them by giving us a substitute for them" (Madison, 1993, 137). It is at times when Derrida shows his more inventive streak that he is at his best, when his work belongs to the history of world-disclosure in which old vocabularies are challenged, redescribed and replaced by new vocabularies. This is carried out through the movement of the Hegelian *Aufhebung*, in which old vocabularies are played off against new ones, and this, for Rorty, is what Derrida is so good at (Madison, 1993, 143).

From Rorty's perspective then, Derrida comes into his own when he is not seeking conclusions or generality, when he drops argument and theory. He picks up on the connection Derrida makes (in *The Postcard*) between generality and the production of children (something that will be of constant interest in this thesis): "what has betrayed us, is that you wanted generality, which is what I call a child" (Rorty, 1989, 128).²⁹ As Rorty rightly points out, "[c]hildren, like the universal public truths (or privileged descriptions, or unique names) which metaphysicians hope to hand down to posterity, are traditionally thought of as a way of evading death and finitude. But children, and the succeeding generation of philosophers, tend to patricide and matricide (Rorty, 1989, 128). Rorty likes the Derrida who rejects the need to produce that which will succeed him and maintain him in memory as a child maintains the life of its parents

²⁸ Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York), 123.

²⁹ Rorty does not want something too playful it would seem: he claims that *Envois* (in *The Postcard*) differs from *Glas* in being readable (Rorty, 1989, 126), which, as I hope this thesis will attest, is simply untrue. *Glas* is immensely readable, assuming of course that one knows, or learns, how to read.

through its own life. He likes the Derrida of the interminable text as opposed to the terminable book “which now appears as the contrast between love for its own sake and love for the sake of making babies ” (Rorty, 1989, 129). He likes the Derrida who is interested in the accidental, the marginal and the material, the Derrida who is interested in singularity and whose “associations are necessarily private; for insofar as they become public they find their way into dictionaries and encyclopedias ” (Rorty, 1989, 131). He likes the Derrida who demonstrates and refutes nothing, who is not interested in the question of to what use such work will be put, but who recontextualises, who enjoys writing and counter-writing for its own sake, and who revels in the fact that “crosstalk is all we are going to get” (Rorty, 1982, 108).

For Rorty, any transcendental elements in Derrida’s work belong to the ‘early’ Derrida who was caught in the need to continue the work of Heidegger. So Rorty, like Habermas and Dews, does believe that Derrida makes transcendental claims for *différance*, the trace, the supplement and so forth, but, unlike these others, he also sees Derrida rescind this task in favour of a more literary activity. For Rorty, philosophy as problem-solving is Kantian, argumentative, foundationalist, interested in generality, and it presupposes a God’s-eye-view from which to complete these tasks. Like Habermas, Rorty explicitly demarcates ‘styles’ of writing in order to equate philosophy, argumentation, and transcendentalism on the one hand, and literature, world-disclosure and anti-foundationalism on the other. The first belongs to the early deconstruction which comes to be opposed to the playful writing of a deconstruction that has freed itself from the need to deal with ideas, that offers up not solutions but a rhetorical practice engaged with the material features of words. Rorty thus defends Derrida against accusations of transcendentalism by claiming that Derrida gives up arguing, and, since he therefore has no ‘point’ to make, he cannot be basing his writing on anything, including *différance*.

Philosophy and Literature: The Levelling of Genre Distinctions?

I want to tackle a couple of Rorty's points. In identifying the 'later' Derrida as following in the footsteps of Hegel and as master of the *Aufhebung*, Rorty's Derrida uses metaphysics under erasure, a stepping stone to a new language game. The early Derrida is a transcendental Derrida who, having put foundations in place, then goes on to multiply the "refuse heap of interpretations" (Habermas, 1987, 183). For Rorty this seems like an extremely good idea, a way of playing language games off against one another. However, against his will perhaps and certainly coming from a very different angle, Rorty's interpretation of 'under erasure' seems to confirm Dews's suspicion that Derrida is dependent upon the terms and concepts of identity in order to articulate *différance*. Through Rorty's reading of deconstruction, Dews can claim not only that Derrida is trying to make *différance* transcendental, but also that he is mistaken since this *différance* is dependent upon identity.

However, using terms under erasure is not simply a way of taking recourse to concepts of identity. While 'erasure' does seem a little dialectical, mimicking Hegel's *Aufhebung*, it does not promise dialectical resolution or reappropriation. Rather, it is more a matter of respect for the distinctions that a history of philosophy has put in place. Deconstruction is not engaged with respect as acceptance, but neither is it in the business of a wholesale rejection of the metaphysical as if it no longer had any bearing on the way in which concepts function in the present. The crucial point, which Dews misunderstands, is that Derrida does not seek to make *différance* the opposite of identity. *Difference* and identity may have been opposed throughout the history of metaphysics, but *différance*, as the same which is not identical, precedes this opposition. In 'Plato's Pharmacy' (in *Dissemination*) Derrida marks out 'the same that is not identical' as the fund of opposition, the *différance* out of which oppositions come to demarcate themselves. Before identity and nonidentity were forged into opposition, they were the 'same' and yet, as different, were not identical. Derrida is not annulling the differences between oppositions, such as that between identity and nonidentity, but is showing

that these concepts can never be absolute; the concept of identity is defined through its engagement with nonidentity. And while this may undermine the concept of identity (which ought to be self-identical) it does not efface how philosophers have *desired* this concept to work. One can acknowledge the role the concept of identity has played, and continues to play, whilst acknowledging that this concept is itself produced by the tension between identity and nonidentity. Derrida thus recognises a history of oppositions but is interested in why, and from where, such oppositions have been produced and the margins which stand between and contaminate them. What needs to be understood once again then, is what Derrida means by contamination, and also his view on ‘distinctions.’

This view is probably most clear when it comes to dealing with Rorty’s main point. Rorty is right to say that writing and discourse do not mirror something that exists ‘out there,’ whether that be reality, ideas, truth, or so on. Language games engage with other language games, but they are not ‘about something’ that is independent of those games and which could be argued about in the sense in which Rorty understands argumentation.³⁰ For him then, Derrida is not a transcendental philosopher because he is not trying to argue, within the unity of a single language game, about something that exists in a transcendental position with regard to these multiple language games. But there is also a problem here. For Rorty’s understanding of argumentation is quite restricted and contrary to Derrida’s view of argumentation. Indeed, as Derrida says, deconstruction is concerned with interrogating rigid demarcations of argumentation from non-argumentation, philosophy from literature. And this is where I find a difficulty with what Rorty is doing. On the one hand he happily separates argumentation from non-argumentation, and yet by the same token and having removed argumentation from the scene, he then seems equally happy to merge literature and philosophy. He demarcates here, merges there. And while Derrida is keen on interrogating what argumentation might mean, he

³⁰ As John Caputo notes, Rorty seems to argue this point, as indeed, he argues for, and makes quasi-transcendental claims for, ‘recontextualisation.’ This leads Caputo to say that “I do not see why Rorty thinks he is so much cleaner of the stain of philosophy than Derrida.” (*More Radical Hermeneutics: On Not Knowing Who We Are*, 2000, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis), 97.

also understands that distinctions between philosophy and literature, between argumentation and nonargumentation, cannot simply be dismantled, but that one must be “attentive to the difference of space, of history, of historical rites, of logic, of rhetoric, protocols and argumentation” of the different genres (Mouffe, 1996, 79).

Now it seems to me that this relation between philosophy and literature, and between various discursive forms, is often a problematic and misunderstood area of Derrida’s work, and certainly it forms the basis of one of Habermas’ chief objections against Derrida. But if Habermas had read Derrida on this point, rather than basing his argument on Rorty’s reading of Derrida, Habermas would never have been able to accuse Derrida of simply blurring genre distinctions. However, although Habermas is wrong, Derrida’s comments on such relations are extensive, complex, and can sometimes *appear* contradictory, so its worth taking a moment to try to sort through them. On the one hand, Derrida says that these genres are distinct. Philosophy is not literature, and literature is not philosophy. At the same time, Derrida also writes about contamination, a ‘general writing’ and a non-site beyond philosophy and literature. It is a matter therefore of equating these strands without, on the one hand, simply accepting contradiction, and without on the other hand annulling the complexity and subtlety of Derrida’s understanding.

In his ‘Remarks on Deconstruction and Pragmatism’ Derrida says that he does not want to confuse philosophy and literature (Mouffe, 1996, 79). But elsewhere he also admits that “now, less than ever, do I know what philosophy is. My knowledge of what constitutes the essence of philosophy is at zero degree.”³¹ And he says the same of literature. So that while Derrida is unable to pinpoint the essences (or non-essences) of philosophy or literature, that does not mean that they are identical nor that they have no specific characteristics of their own.

³¹ Jacques Derrida, ‘Deconstruction and the Other’ in *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers: The Phenomenological Heritage*, ed. Richard Kearney (1984, Manchester University Press, Manchester), 114.

Similarly, while philosophy and literature are distinctive, this does not prevent philosophy from engaging with other disciplines. “It is as impossible to say what philosophy *is not* as it is to say what it *is*. In all the other disciplines [...] there is philosophy” (Kearney, 1984, 114). While philosophy has no essence, Derrida nonetheless sees it at work in other disciplines. It must therefore have an identity of sorts, moreover, an identity which allows it to be determined as distinct from these other disciplines even when it is at work in them. It engages with these other disciplines in several ways: for a start, philosophy determines the borders of disciplines, that is, it determines the concept of borders or of distinctions. And all disciplines must interrogate themselves philosophically, engaging with the concepts of identity in order to ask themselves ‘what am I?’ Moreover, as Derrida shows in ‘Cogito and the History of Madness,’ any discursive system is always bound to metaphysics if it wishes to make sense, or indeed, to speak or write at all. So philosophy pervades and conceptualises all discourses; it determines the borders of a body or institution of thought, and it permeates the discourses and concepts of a discipline.

But while philosophy infiltrates other genres, it is itself difficult to identify. This is partly because, as a discipline, it is philosophically determined; its concept of itself is a concept and thus philosophical. This attributes an essence to philosophy, but this attribution is a philosophical act and determines a concept of philosophy that is itself philosophical. In other words, since the language describing philosophy is philosophical, it is unable to dominate the field to which it belongs. The determination of philosophy thus has a kind of *mise-en-abyme* structure, in which philosophy is philosophically determined in a determination which is philosophically determined, indefinitely. But more than this, for Derrida philosophy is not absolutely self-identical; one could not cup philosophy in one’s hands and say ‘there, now I have it.’ Philosophy is not one thing, but is *différent*.

So while there is no *absolute* or transcendental identity to philosophy, this does not mean that there is no identity to philosophy. It does not escape conceptualisation, but is a distinct and

determined body of thought that has a specific place in the institution. While there is no essence of philosophy *as such*, there are laws, institutions and conventions that determine what philosophy is and is not, in a broad sense at least.³² These distinctions are both philosophically determined, and determined by other disciplines or sub-disciplines, such as speech act theory which, as one of the fields of enquiry responsible for separating out genres, discursive forms and so forth, is “a theory of right or law, of convention, of political ethics or of politics as ethics ” (LI, 97). In his reply to Searle, Derrida is keen to stress that such distinctions must be respected.

Every concept that lays claim to any rigor whatsoever implies the alternative of ‘all or nothing.’ [...] It is impossible or illegitimate to form a *philosophical concept* outside this logic of all or nothing. But one can (and this is what I try to do elsewhere) think or deconstruct the concept of the concept otherwise, think a *différance* [...]. But it is true, when a concept is to be treated as a concept I believe that one has to accept the logic of all or nothing. [...] Whenever one feels obliged to stop doing this (as happens to me when I speak of *différance*, of mark, of supplement, of iterability and of all they entail), it *is better* to make explicit in the most conceptual, rigorous, formalizing, and pedagogical manner possible the reasons one has for doing so, for thus changing the rules and the context of discourse.

To [...] oppositional discourse [...] I oppose nothing, least of all a logic of *approximation*, a simple empiricism of difference in degree; rather I add a supplementary complication that calls for other concepts, for other thoughts beyond the concept and another form of ‘general theory,’ or rather another discourse, another ‘logic’ that accounts for the impossibility of concluding such a ‘general theory ’ (LI, 116-117).

Distinctions must be respected, but respected for what they are. They are not ‘natural’ but are produced, often out of the very distinction between the natural and non-natural. As Derrida says, “[a]ll that a deconstructive point of view tries to show, is that since convention, institutions and consensus are stabilizations [...], this means they are stabilizations of something essentially unstable and chaotic ” (Mouffe, 1996, 83). Derrida is interested in the history of these conventions and stabilisations, in interrogating the relation of concepts to discourse, the borders and margins between distinctions. So that one must think “*at once* both the rule and the event, concept and singularity ” (LI, 119). While philosophy plays a role in determining other disciplines and genres, this determination has a history, is subject to and

³² This is also why literature can never be private (See Mouffe, 1996, 80 and A, 36).

productive of laws. And while Derrida wants to question these laws, these conventions, and this history, he is not intent on simply doing away with them, thereby replacing them with another set of laws and conventions. He believes in contamination, but contamination implies separation as well as convergence. Derrida is thus interested in the border, the limit point where genres meet and part, with what he calls the *hymen* or the between.³³

To understand the relation between philosophy and literature then, requires a sensitivity towards the complexities of what Derrida means when he says that the same is not identical. While there is contamination, while literature and philosophy are both 'writing' in Derrida's sense, this writing is never identical. Philosophy and literature are the same that is not identical; one must be attuned not only to what they share but also to their specificities, their singularities.³⁴ That does not prevent their contamination, but neither does it make them identical. And while a body of writing can be both literary and philosophical, this is not an attempt to simply nullify the distinctions between these genres. Rather, it has more to do with what I understand to be a syntax of genres, in which there is contamination but also in which certain genres can be at work simultaneously within a text, either at different times or places, or at different levels in the same time and place. As Christopher Norris puts it, "*one and the same text* might possess both literary value (on account of its fictive, metaphorical or stylistic attributes) and philosophic cogency (by virtue of its power to criticize normative truth claims" (D'Entreves & Benhabib, 1996, 113). This is not so much a fusion as a confusion and profusion and in order to understand it requires "new distinctions that give up on the purity and

³³ David Couzens Hoy argues in his essay 'Splitting the Difference: Habermas's Critique of Derrida' that Derrida is not taking the side of world-disclosure against problem-solving but is challenging the distinction and splitting the difference. He asserts that Habermas's distinction is not an adequate 'theory of theory,' but itself ignores the complexity of both philosophy and literature, thus falling into the same difficulty of which he accused Derrida. This essay forms part of a collection of critical responses to Habermas's *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* entitled *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity*, ed.s Maurizio Passerin D'Entreves & Seyla Benhabib (1996, The Polity Press, Cambridge).

³⁴ At the same time, as Christopher Norris points out, while the 'style' of Derrida's writing may change from being more explicitly argumentative to a textuality that makes "maximum use of literary devices," these 'later' texts "continue to work within the same problematics of writing, language and representation" ('Deconstruction, Postmodernism and Philosophy: Habermas on Derrida,' in D'Entreves & Benhabib, 1996, 111).

linearity of frontiers. They should have a form that is both rigorous and capable of taking into account the essential contamination between all these oppositions” (A, 52).

As such, it is the borders or margins between distinctions, the points at which ^{the} unstable or chaotic is not contained by opposition or at which the unstable comes to meet its stabilisations, that interest Derrida. While the philosophical concept of distinctions must be recognised, it must also be interrogated. Such interrogation can perhaps only take place from the margins between such distinctions. Derrida thus dreams of a writing that is beyond the distinction between philosophy and literature, that does not annul that distinction but works with it, mimicking the form of those distinctions while, through this mimicry, moving beyond them. He dreams of a fictional, quasi-transcendental writing.

The Quasi-Transcendental: Rodolphe Gasché

Quasi-transcendental is perhaps the most adequate (or the least inadequate) name for a movement that plays with the positive terms of philosophy, such as the transcendental, while at once dismantling these terms by showing their complicity with what they seek to subordinate to themselves. These terms go to compose a structure that orders the history of philosophy. But since this structure is itself quasi-transcendental, it cannot order or govern in a traditional sense since it too is subject to this play of complicity. The commentator who perhaps has made most of the quasi-transcendental in Derrida’s work is Rodolphe Gasché. In *The Tain of the Mirror* (Gasché, 1986) Gasché paints a picture of a Derrida engaged in debate with philosophy’s quest for the ultimate foundation, for the foundation of *what is*. He sees deconstruction as “a subtle economy that recognizes the essential requirements of philosophical thought while questioning the limits of the possibility of these requirements” (Gasché, 1986, 7). Gasché’s Derrida is thus concerned with identifying conditions of possibility and impossibility of basic philosophemes, and Gasché condenses these conditions into the term ‘infrastructure.’ An infrastructure is an ‘open matrix’ in which oppositions and contradictions

are engendered, the fund from which oppositions are drawn. Infrastructures represent for Gasché the relations that organise and account for differences, aporias, contradictions, and so forth (Gasché, 1986, 147). But they are only “unities by simulacrum”³⁵ which knot together areas of correspondence and contradiction (Gasché, 1986, 152).

Gasché’s infrastructures, a term for which Derrida has no particular fondness (A, 71), thus appear to be transcendental to the system of metaphysics, and indeed, Gasché is often accused of trying to make Derrida into a transcendental philosopher. But what must be remembered is that just as much as they are conditions of possibility they are also conditions of impossibility. And this explains why they cannot be transcendental but must be understood as quasi-transcendental. Now there are many examples of the quasi-transcendental, such as *différance*, the trace, the supplement, the *pharmakon* to name but a few. What these quasi-transcendentals share is a constitutive role in the concepts of metaphysics, which at the same time serves to deconstitute, or deconstruct, the texts or sites in which they are found. For example, Derrida shows in *Glas* how the figure of the sister plays a transcendental role, a constitutive role that is necessary to the functioning of Hegel’s phenomenology. But the sister is excluded, non-present, and cannot be thought by the system to which she does/not belong. As such, being both outside and inside the system, she upsets the very process of reappropriation which she enables, and she thus makes that structure disfunction. A condition of possibility, she is also a condition of impossibility (G, 162a). Or again, in *Dissemination* Derrida shows that while Plato tries to expel the *pharmakon* – the poisonous effects of writing – from the purity of philosophical speech, his text testifies otherwise, revealing not only such an exclusion to be impossible, but that the *pharmakon*, the impurity, is necessary to the purity that Plato tries to maintain. On these occasions, the quasi-transcendental occupies a position of alterity with regard to the unity of the system which it puts into operation and at the same time forbids. These excluded terms make the very system they make possible at once impossible. As much

³⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (1981, The Chicago Press, Chicago), 58.

as they are transcendental to the system, the sister and the *pharmakon* challenge the very nature of transcendence since they are also excluded from the system. They are therefore quasi-transcendental.

Another way of looking at quasi-transcendentals is as ‘necessary possibilities.’ For example, what allows for the sending of a letter, the postal network, also allows for the nonarrival of that letter. What allows for an ideality to be repeated as the same, iterability, also means that the original that is being repeated never has been absolutely self-identical but must always already have been divided and thus open to distortion and displacement. That an accident can always happen means that it can no longer be excluded as a mere contingency, but that it is a necessary possibility, that is, *always possible and thus necessarily possible*. It thus belongs to the very identity of what is in question, no longer merely an addition that affects an original purity, but as that which has always already contaminated that purity.

Quasi-transcendentals therefore are conditions of possibility *and* of impossibility. And it is this very possibility *and* impossibility that prevents them from being simple transcendentals. The quasi-transcendental contaminates the transcendental with what it attempts to distance from itself, for example the empirical, and shows how the transcendental is dependent on the promise of this distance. So that the empirical then becomes a condition of possibility, in other words transcendental, to the transcendental. This would appear then to make the empirical into some super- or ultra- transcendental. However, this ultra-transcendental thus puts into question the very structure of the transcendental which, as Geoffrey Bennington says, “it pulls down onto a feature that transcendence would like to consider as empirical. If we formalize this situation to the extreme, we produce a proposition (‘the empirical is the transcendental of the transcendental [of the empirical]’) which is readable only if its terms undergo a displacement from one occurrence to another” (Bennington, 1993, 278-79). Bennington shows how, in contrast to Peter Dews’s opinion that Derrida strictly demarcates the transcendental and the empirical, in fact the opposite is the case. Deconstruction takes its force from showing

the contamination of terms, the dependency of the transcendental on the empirical, of the intelligible on the sensible, of the represented on the representation, the ideality on the repetition.³⁶ This does not mean that what was traditionally thought of as the inferior term, the empirical, sensible or representation, suddenly becomes the grounding force. It is the interdependency, the relation or the *between* that carries the force of the operation, with neither term in a position of authority. The quasi-transcendental is thus a play of tension, of interactions, rebounds and relations.

Quasi-transcendental terms thus play the role of the transcendental in a syntactic way, never static but put into effect, and affected, by the play of *différance* which makes the transcendental term shift from one position to another. Marian Hobson's work on what she calls 'replications' is helpful for understanding this.³⁷ Replications form a kind of rocking movement, an instability in which the force of the operation shifts from one term to another, but moreover, in which the supposedly dominant term is constantly dividing into a repetition of itself and into its inferior opposite. Replications thus parody the dialectical form, through which for example, Hegel would like to see spirit as dividing itself into spirit and matter in order to reflect its intelligibility back to itself through the sensible form. It is a parody however because here this leads to an asymmetrical repetition which engenders a surplus that cannot be reappropriated. The complicity involved in the process of replicating thus prevents not only closure, but also highlights that it is the contamination, the relays and relations, differences and deferrals, rather than the dominance of one of the terms, that is allowing for the dominant term to emerge. Quasi-transcendentals are therefore *différant* to themselves, undecidable since they can never be fixed nor their borders strictly determined. Undecidability here should not be thought of in opposition to decidability; it refers not only to incompleteness

³⁶ If the discourse of deconstruction relies upon the terms of opposition to show this contamination however, it is not because it is taking recourse to concepts of identity but because these are the discursive tactics it has at its disposal. It cannot simply step outside of opposition but must articulate this contamination from within the language of metaphysics.

³⁷ Marian Hobson, *Jacques Derrida: Opening Lines* (1998, Routledge, London & New York). See in particular Chapter Three 'Replications.'

and inconsistency, but also indicates a level vaster than that encompassed by the opposition decidable/undecidable.

We must not fall into the trap of believing that undecidability would be the last right word for what we are trying to say here, and that moreover it would have the advantage of communicating with a mathematical modernity and thus legitimate deconstruction in everybody's eyes. As early as his first book, Derrida shows with Husserl how Godel's undecidability remains in a relation that must be described as dialectical with the decidability it respects and maintains as a horizon (Bennington, 1993, 280).

Quasi-transcendental terms, or undecidables, cannot be used simply in and of themselves, but only function within the play of other terms. This explains why they can never be said to have a foundational or grounding capacity. For they do not exist in a position of authority with regard to the text but are produced out of the tension *between* terms. As Gasché says, while deconstruction focuses on the heterogeneous elements or agencies that combine on different levels of philosophical discourse, it does not seek to reduce these to one model of divergency. It does not seek to reduce them but to account for them, not to overcome them but to maintain them. It starts with a systematic elucidation of contradictions, paradoxes, discrepancies, that are constitutive of conceptuality, argumentation, discourse. But since these are not logical discrepancies logic cannot account for them (Gasché, 1986, 135-136). And as the quotation taken from Geoffrey Bennington's text above showed, to take recourse to a mathematical formulation, to view these undecidable quasi-transcendentals through logic, would be to annul, by the act of legitimating, the very force of the operation in question. As much as a quasi-transcendental term might be said to ground a discourse, it also ungrounds it. This is not simply word-play. Once again, a traditional concept, here that of legitimation, must be rethought, just as the transcendental has been rethought.

Legitimation

Habermas claims that, through *différance* or archewriting, Derrida undercuts the foundationalist capacity of the origin. He also claims that this makes *différance* into a more

profound origin that prescribes the tools of deconstruction. Habermas is partly right. Derrida has indeed undercut the foundationalist concept of the origin, revealing it to be as much produced as productive, as much the result of repetitions as the source of repetitions. But that does not mean that he has now placed *différance* in this role. For a start, *différance* is not the origin of differences, discrepancies, contradictions, and so forth. *Différance* is not the origin of anything. *Différance* is produced as much as productive, active as much as passive. It only occurs when it is engaged with the terms of philosophy, producing and produced by the tension, the play of relations and *différences*, between terms. And it too is subject to *différance*, or as I noted earlier, 'enmeshed' in *différance*. *Différance* is always *différant*. It too is as ungrounded as all other terms, and cannot then have the capacity to found or ground them. It has no meta-authority; it is neither the first nor last word in philosophy. It is always singular and idiomatic, since it defers and differs from itself on each occasion.

This in turn explains why *différance* cannot be said to prescribe the tools of deconstruction. What must be remembered at all times is the way in which terms such as *différance*, the quasi-transcendental and so forth, are themselves undergoing a constant displacement and as such can never be seen to simply ground, found or legitimate the terms which they organise and disorganise. So that while some of these quasi-transcendental terms, such as *différance* or the trace, have become something like motifs of deconstruction, in each case Derrida emphasises how they are rooted in the text in which they are found. That is, they do not have a meta-authority beyond the text, but are used in a singular manner on each occasion. This is why deconstruction is not a critique but a way of thinking about the conceptualisation of critiques and the limitations of theory. Deconstruction cannot, as Habermas desires, be tested against normative validity claims with the aim of reaching a consensus because it is an interrogation of the 'normative,' of 'validity' and of 'consensus.' As David Couzens Hoy says, in "the strong sense of 'theory' that we inherit from the time since Galileo, a theory should have concepts, principles, and arguments based on evidence, and it should organize all the relevant

phenomena in a single explanatory system. Deconstruction is not itself 'theory' in this sense, but is more the general operation of resisting efforts at such theorization."³⁸ This does not result, as Habermas suggests, in a wanton freeplay. Rather, deconstruction takes its cue from the text, a 'response' to the *différences* therein.

So while Derrida does appear to search out those elements in texts which seem in some way unhappy with their lot, these 'blind tactics' do not amount to a methodology but a response motivated, "at least in (irreducible) part, according to the flair and chance of encounters with what is bequeathed or repressed by the tradition" (Bennington, 1993, 267). These quasi-transcendentals seem to call out because they are not a positive part of metaphysical conceptuality but are given in metaphysics in a negative manner (Gasché, 1986, 120).³⁹ They do not belong in some dialectical or reappropriable fashion to the text, but are 'outside on the inside'. And if these quasi-transcendentals appear to have a certain commonality, it is perhaps because they are produced out of the tension between themselves and the concepts of a metaphysics which has consistently concerned itself with consistency. That is, since metaphysics has established a structure of dominant ideologies and conceptual oppositions, it is thus likely that those terms which disrupt this structure will appear to form a network of inconsistencies, even if in fact no such network exists. As Henry Staten puts it, if *différance*

³⁸ 'Splitting the Difference: Habermas's Critique of Derrida' (D'Entreves & Benhabib, 1996), 134.

³⁹ This also explains why the disagreement between Rorty and Gasché occurs. In contrast to Rorty's version of a Derrida who does not argue because he uses different language games in his premises and conclusions, for Gasché the very same reason explains why Derrida *is* a philosopher who likes to argue: the resources necessary to argue about metaphysics and about those terms excluded by metaphysics are outside of metaphysics; they are the excluded, the repressed, the *pharmakos*, of philosophical discourse. To argue about them is necessarily to move in and out of different levels of discourse, and different language games. For Gasché then, Derrida has not renounced argumentation simply because the terms he uses differ in his propositions and conclusions. Rather, the quasi-transcendental writing of deconstruction has undercut the opposition between argumentation and non-argumentation, between saying and doing, the constative and the performative (Rodolphe Gasché, *Inventions of Difference*, 1994, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts & London, 11-12). Moreover, as Derrida's essay 'Inventions of the Other' goes to show, an invention can never be simply private. (Gasché, 1994, 9). Derrida thus seeks a writing that is both, and thus neither, private and/nor public, philosophy and/nor literature: a quasi-transcendental fictionality.

appears to be foundational, it is “installed in that zone because that is the zone in which the concepts [it] is designed to context are located.”⁴⁰

Différance thus cannot ground différence or deconstruction. It is not transcendental but quasi-transcendental. This does not prevent Gasché from granting différence a grounding capacity, but this is not a capacity that can ground différence itself. For Gasché deconstruction *is* a form of philosophical accounting because it accounts for the ways in which the dominant concepts of metaphysics have been engendered and asserted their power. But since what is accounting for these concepts and philosophemes cannot itself be accounted for, this is not legitimation in the usual sense. Deconstruction inscribes these terms in their relation with other, repressed, excluded or inferior, terms. By bringing the origin or the transcendental into relation with what exceeds it, deconstruction accounts for the origin/transcendental by showing what they have left out of account. But this excess cannot itself be accounted for since it is in excess of the finite or restricted economy in which such (ac)counting can take place. It cannot be counted, but is irreducibly plural and abyssal. “Precisely by refusing to command itself or anything else, this operation can function as that alterity that absolutely escapes the logic of philosophical accounting while at the same time ‘accounting’ for it. As soon as the infrastructures, or the deconstructive operation of inscription, or *mise en rapport*, tries to subject something to itself, itself included, it turns into what it purports to account for” (Gasché, 1986, 162).⁷ As such, “[i]t is impossible to account for something that inscribes the operation of accounting in a cluster of structural possibilities that exclude their own self-domination and self-reflection. Yet it is precisely this impossibility of accounting that allows inscription, or *mise en rapport*, to explain what it inscribes – the origins, the principle of legitimacy and responsibility, the *de jure* conditions, and so on” (Gasché, 1986, 162-63). Deconstruction can account for philosophical concepts but is unable to account for what is in excess of such concepts. What Gasché means then, is that while deconstruction is able to

⁴⁰ Henry Staten, *Wittgenstein and Derrida* (1984, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln & London), 62.

account for the relations between terms within a finite system or economy, their relations of exchange, of placeholding and of dominance, it is unable to account for what is beyond those terms, the larger field in which they are engendered.

Différance does not operate as a master-term, transcendental to the play of differences. It is quasi-transcendental and thus cannot be the origin, the prescriber or legitimator of anything. Yes, the non-concept of différance does help to explain how certain concepts have procured and maintained a philosophical dominance, and in this way I think Gasché's claim that deconstruction 'accounts' for terms such as the transcendental has a certain cogency. And yes, it does show how these concepts are produced by différance, by their différance to themselves, and in this way does grant différance 'something like' a transcendental status. But the 'something like' is crucial here, for since this différance 'nowhere *is*' it cannot be said to ground these terms in itself, just as it cannot be its own grounds. In contrast to what Habermas believes, différance is not another name for God and the quasi-transcendental is not a way of granting différance the authority of a super-transcendental, but a way of showing how concepts and terms are inscribed in a play of textuality in which none have dominance, including the term différance itself.

Deconstruction and Negative Theology

To conclude this introduction, I want to return to one of Habermas' criticisms that I cited earlier, namely that deconstruction is a form of negative theology. Habermas believes that deconstruction is a negative theology because différance is another name for God, an absent Jewish-Dionysian God who governs the rules of play by being never-present(able), the

invisible law of law.⁴¹ I have shown that *différance* is not another name for God, and that while *différance* does in some ways account for concepts of law, repetition and the origin, it does not govern or act as a 'law of law' in the sense that Habermas understands. So deconstruction is not a negative theology if one holds that at the centre of such theology stands an ultimate term, such as God or *différance*. Nevertheless, as I noted earlier, Derrida does see parallels between the discourses of negative theology and deconstruction. Why then, if *différance* is not God, does deconstruction resemble negative theology? Is there an 'other' negative theology with which deconstruction does have an affinity and can this explain the 'resemblance'?

⁴¹ Habermas is not alone in noting the relation between deconstruction and negative theology, with many critics expanding upon Derrida's claim that writing begins with God's withdrawal and the relation between scripture and *écriture*. Derrida is seen to pursue, and/or combine, the Christian-Dionysian motif of a promised return with a Judaic emphasis on scripture. Thus *écriture* is viewed as the repetition of a divine, but absent writing, and this, when combined with Derrida's works on the 'promise,' the 'secret,' the 'gift,' and 'responsibility,' is seen to articulate a link between writing and the preservation and retrieval of a messianic other in the form of *différance*. So for example, Gideon Ofrat seeks to show that Derrida's claim that the source/origin is unattainable makes deconstruction a radical form of negative theology which meditates on the possible-impossible (God) as the infinite other behind writing (Gideon Ofrat, *The Jewish Derrida*, trans. Peretz Kidron, 2001, Syracuse University Press, New York, 54-5). *Différance* becomes an inaccessible secret whose secrecy must be preserved in order to leave the other its otherness (Ofrat, 2001, 56-8). Ofrat maintains a connection between God and what he sees as the testamentary essence of *différance*, and like Habermas, he identifies a relation between the writing of *différance* and Judaism. In contrast to the Christian motif of God as the divine light behind revelation, Ofrat's Derrida conflates 'writing' with the ashes and remains of a holocaust which has destroyed Being and Plato's sun. As I shall show in Chapter Three, Derrida does indeed articulate relations between writing and holocaust, for example in *Glas*, where holocaust is identified at/as the opening to Hegel's speculative project. Moreover, Derrida's interest extends to the contamination of the discursive practices and conceptual frameworks of different (institutionalised) religions and their correlative philosophies, allowing Derrida to explore the ways in which Hegel can only maintain Christianity as the true religion by thinking it through and with Judaism. The troubling aspect of work such as Ofrat's however, is the desire to 'rescue' deconstruction from an atheistic interpretation (that makes *différance* replace – take-the-place-of – God, which itself is troubling) by reading *différance* as God, an absent Judaic God who speaks through writing and ash. As his title *The Jewish Derrida* reflects, Ofrat reads works such as *Glas* as indicative of Derrida's own religious beliefs and practices. But Derrida's interest in theological systems, in what he calls onto-theology, is not an engagement with questions as to the reality or irreality of God, nor a matter of Derrida's 'personal belief' (whether that be theistic or atheistic, Jewish or Greco-Christian), nor is it a bid to replace God with a divinised *différance*. Derrida's work is concerned with the 'other,' and with saying 'come' to the other, opening deconstruction to the impossible, the secret and the chance encounter, engaging with questions of justice and responsibility. And indeed, while this might sound slightly prophetic or messianic, it has more to do with making room for faith and for singularity than with a belief in any determinate faith or singularity, including God and *différance*. Deconstruction does not seek to replace God with *différance*. Nor does it seek to replace Greco-Christian philosophemes with Jewish ones, but to show the contamination between them, thus opening out the im/possibility of the impossible which is felt by both but reducible to neither.

The relation between deconstruction and theology, faith and the 'other,' is a complex area of Derrida's work, and it is impossible to do it justice in the short space I have here.⁴² But I want to pick up on one aspect of it that is of particular pertinence. That is the relation between discourse and God; in other words, the relation itself, between God and man, man and God, within a totality. As both Kevin Hart and John Caputo say in their works on deconstruction and negative theology, deconstruction does not seek to make claims about God but to challenge any discourse that maintains itself as a totality and in which questions of meaning are resolved by reference to a centre, origin, end or ground.⁴³ Derrida's difficulty with theological discourses lies in the *ontos* they imply. Kevin Hart picks up on Derrida's claim that for metaphysics "[t]he sign is always a sign of the fall. Absence always relates to distancing from God" (OG, 283). Philosophy tells that after the 'fall' the world becomes a play of presence and absence in which signs signify the withdrawal of a divine presence that reveals itself in signs. Whether in nature or scripture, signs need interpreting, but only in ways that acknowledge the timeless truths behind them. The sign thus becomes a repetition of a preceding presence, a passage from one presence to another, from the infinite mind of God to the finite mind of man (Hart, 1989, 4). In turn, the dual oppositions of philosophy translate this fall as the fall from the immediate into the mediate, the proper into the figural, the divine into the human, the intelligible into the sensible. (Hart, 1989, 5-6). For this reason theology becomes a semiology, and for many, including Hegel, this reaches its height in the perfect sign, Jesus Christ, who is both the word of God and God himself, incarnated. Christ is both the signifier and the signified of the greatest signified of all, the transcendental signified of God (Hart, 1989, 7).

⁴² For this reason I have chosen to focus primarily on two of Derrida's essays, 'How to Avoid Speaking: Denials' (trans. Ken Frieden) and 'Post-Scriptum: Aporias, Ways and Voices' (trans. John P. Leavey Jr.) both of which are included in a volume of critical responses to Derrida's thoughts on negative theology entitled *Derrida and Negative Theology*, ed.s Harold Coward & Toby Foshay (1998, State University of New York Press, Albany).

⁴³ See John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion* (1997, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indiana), 19; and Kevin Hart, *The Trespass of the Sign: Deconstruction, Theology and Philosophy* (1989, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge), 27-32.

The divine is thus seen to articulate itself through the mundane, revealing its absolute presence through its absence in the 'here and now' and through the traces it gives of itself. Both positive and negative theologies determine God within an ontological framework, but they differ in their belief as to the power of this ontology, and this affects their discursive strategies. Whereas positive theology identifies God as the greatest Being of all, present(able) through the discourse of ontology as 'Our Father,' in negative theology God is transcendent to Being, *more* than Being, and thus *beyond* the categories of ontology. As a result, negative theology finds itself confronted with the somewhat paradoxical problematic of 'how to speak of the unspeakable transcendence of God.' As Derrida says in his 'Post-Scriptum: Aporias, Ways and Voices,' "Negative theology is the thought on what appears impossible, more than impossible, the most impossible possible, more impossible than the impossible if the impossible is the simple negative of the possible" (Coward & Foshay, 1992, 290). And this is where deconstruction has something in common with negative theology. It too faces this impossibility as "the experience of the (impossible) possibility of the impossible" (Coward & Foshay, 1992, 292).

Now it has already been established that the impossible of which deconstruction writes (*différance*) is not the impossible of which negative theology writes (God). They differ semantically. While negative theology seeks (to articulate) the hyper-real or hyper-essential, "[d]ifférance is but a quasi-transcendental anteriority, not a supereminent, transcendental ulteriority" (Caputo, 1997, 3). Nonetheless, as writing (of) the impossible, they have syntactic and strategic similarities. That is, there is an analogy between deconstruction and negative theology in their relation to language. Hart states this analogy as follows: "If God is understood as transcending the phenomenal world, one cannot hope to describe Him because language is restricted in its scope to the realm of the phenomenal. Similarly, if *différance* enables concepts to emerge it cannot be described adequately by concepts" (Hart, 1989, 186). And this is indeed the case; Derrida articulates *différance* through negation, it is neither this

nor that, neither present nor absent, intelligible nor sensible. But he also claims that it is both present *and* absent, intelligible *and* sensible. Différance is not simply negation but also, like negative theology, an affirmation. This is not the affirmation of the supra-essential, but of that which is the condition of possibility and impossibility of thinking such concepts as 'essential.' Now, as I have shown, différance is nothing outside of that for which it is a condition. It is nothing outside of inscription, nothing outside that which binds it to metaphysics and that which binds metaphysics to its deconstruction. In a sense then, différance *always already* writes itself. But the difficulty seems to be in writing *about it*, of writing, in the language of metaphysics, about that which is both outside and inside metaphysics, and both a condition of possibility and impossibility for metaphysics. As such, what deconstruction and negative theology share is a difficulty of articulation; deconstruction seeks to write (of) the impossible in a language that has spent its time denying the possibility of that impossibility even as it moves within it; negative theology seeks to write of the impossible which is a condition for all discourse but is determined as being 'beyond' that discourse. Their motivations are very different, and this is why deconstruction is not a negative theology, but they do share a discursive problematic: how to write (of) the impossible.

Negative theology seeks to overcome the difficulty of articulation by seeking to 'contain' the impossibility, referring to the impossibility itself as a transcendental signified that cannot be contained by the signifier. It seeks to articulate the impossibility of articulating the impossible. It puts its faith in the *sumplope*, in the binding of the unsayable or inexpressible in expression that moves through negation. As Derrida says in 'Postscriptum: Aporias, Ways and Voices,' negative theology takes place in the name of truth, rejects all inadequate attributions in the name of that truth, in the name of *aletheia* as the forgotten secret, in the name of a promised truth. It desires to rejoin what is proper to God through the act of maintaining that desire *as* desire, by denying its fulfilment (Coward & Foshay, 1992, 310). Like an arrow, it launches itself in the direction of that of which it cannot speak (Coward & Foshay, 1992, 304). As such,

while there are many different forms of negative theology grouped under the heading of this genre, Derrida says “[s]uppose, by provisional hypothesis, that negative theology consists of considering that every predicative language is inadequate to the essence, in truth to the hyperessentiality (the being beyond Being) of God; consequently, only a negative (‘apophatic’) attribution can claim to approach God, and to prepare us for a silent intuition of God ” (‘How To Avoid Speaking: Denials’ in Coward & Foshay, 1992, 74). It thus becomes a question of how to avoid speaking, avoid speaking of that about which one so desires to speak.

Silent intuition might be the end aim, but something else also happens through this negation. Negation de-negates the discourse itself. Since God always already knows all possible content of the discourse, negative theology reveals, teaches, and unveils nothing. It is a performative, bound up with desire for the discourse itself (Coward & Foshay, 1992, 285-6). The linguistic event is thus uncertain; it repeats and yet adds, in the singularity of the event, the event itself. It supplements the totality. For Derrida, it is language for its own sake and this becomes what Husserl called a crisis of language. A crisis of the apophatic, negative theology is on the side of the mechanical repetition of phrases without actual or full intentional meaning. Negative theology thus destabilises the phenomenological, the ontological, the transcendental (Coward & Foshay, 1992, 296). The discourse of negative theology thus aims at God but results in discourse itself. In a sense, the success of the belief system of negative theology is measured by the failure to articulate the object of that belief. But importantly, this does not prevent the desire to speak of that about which one cannot speak. Negative theology renounces the value of discourse (its ability to be adequate to its object) and yet maintains itself *as* a discourse. This serves, for Derrida, to heighten rather than to diminish the value of that discourse. The crisis of language becomes a desire for language.

Deconstruction shares this desire to articulate the impossible that cannot be articulated. In deconstruction the ‘object’ of the discourse, *différance*, is not determined (or desired) as

independent of, or in some way 'above,' that discourse. Différance cannot be the simple object or subject of any discourse. Différance *is* (crossed out) the relation between a discourse and what it would like to believe exists independently of that discourse; it is a condition of possibility and impossibility for thinking that independence and its contamination, the possibility and impossibility of the desire to claim God and language as separation and reunification, the space (spacing, articulation, possibility) of that desire. Différance must be thought of as that which, as possibility and impossibility, cannot be articulated and yet is *always already* articulated. It *is* (nothing outside of) articulation or inscription *and* it is the possibility of articulation and inscription. It is to be read everywhere and yet for that very reason escapes the conceptualisation that would be necessary to articulate it. What it shares with negative theology then, is a desire for discourse itself. Where it differs is that it does not seek to bridge a gap between inscription and something that lies beyond inscription, because here inscription, articulation and discourse is all there is. As Derrida says,

There is no conceptual realm beyond language which would allow the term [différance] to have a univocal semantic content over and above its inscription in language. Because it remains a trace of language it remains non-conceptual. And because it has no oppositional or predicative generality, which would identify it as *this* rather than *that*, the term 'différance' cannot be defined within a system of logic – Aristotelian or dialectical – that is, within the logocentric system of philosophy (Kearney, 1984, 111).

This is why différance cannot be ontologically reappropriated; it posits itself as neither the origin nor the end of the discourse. Deconstruction too is a discourse that, through negation, de-negates itself and tells of the power of inscription, differences and relations. But whereas negative theology seeks to articulate that which is beyond language, deconstruction seeks to articulate that which is both inside and outside of metaphysics, to articulate that which metaphysics, whether it likes it or not, is *always already* articulating as its own deconstruction and its own différance.

Negative Theology and Mimesis

Derrida's reading of negative theology shows how metaphysical forms of negative theology maintain themselves within the ontological, their ontological claims in fact heightened by the inability to grasp what lies beyond ontology and the failure of discourse. This failure measures itself against God, praises Him through its inability to match Him. But in so doing, it returns itself to the concept of knowledge as *adequatio*. *Adequatio* here takes the form of an inverted, but parallel, relation. The failure of language measures the success of the idea or concept of God. This relation opens out onto the concept and non-concept of *mimesis*. "This mystic union, this act of *unknowing* [...] knows unknowing itself in its truth, a truth that is not an adequation but an unveiling" (Coward & Foshay, 1992, 80). There may be a lack of adequation, but the unveiling of such a lack means that the structure of *adequatio*, *homoiosis* and *aletheia*, of *mimesis*, remains in place. While God slips out of reach, the relation, and the discourse itself, remain intact.

Derrida identifies this structure in the texts of Plato, and although he does not name it *mimesis* in 'Denials,' his work on Plato in *Dissemination* indicates its link to that concept. 'Denials' tells of Plato's *epekeina tes ousias*, the Good-beyond-being, which transcends presence or essence. This Good reveals itself through the good, and forms the basis of Plato's analogical system in which the intelligible sun represents itself through the sensible sun. This analogical relation prescribes the rules of analogy to man such that he comes to articulate his relation with the infinite Good as the relation between the intelligible and the sensible. Thus the infinite falls into the finite, and thus an analogy allows for the comparison of the representations that the Good gives (of itself) with the productions of man who offers up his own representations of what must represent itself. This process of representation is a negative one, a translation and a fall which is inadequate to its object. The Good cannot be measured or equalled by the good, but this movement thus gives rise to a "hyperbolism" of all that is beyond, and "negativity serves the *hyper* movement" (Coward & Foshay, 1992, 101). As such, "[n]egative discourse on that which stands beyond Being, and apparently no longer tolerates ontological predicates,

does not interrupt this analogical continuity. In truth, it assumes it” (Coward & Foshay, 1992, 102). Derrida goes on to identify a similar pattern in the work of Dionysus (Coward & Foshay, 1992, 109), in which this relation between God and the discourse (prayer and celebration) points up the relation itself as “a passage, a transfer, a translation” in which prayer can no longer be considered “a preamble, an accessory mode of access” (Coward & Foshay, 1992, 110). The unspeakable and inaccessible intersects with the philosophical and demonstrative, but what is of interest for Derrida is “the place, which cannot be an indivisible point, where the two modes cross – such that, properly speaking, the crossing itself, or the *symploke*, belongs to neither of the two modes and doubtless even precedes their distribution” (Coward & Foshay, 1992, 94). This ‘crossing’ or ‘*symploke*’ will be the subject of this thesis. It is a movement of *différance* as *mimesis*, which allows God, the origin, the *eidos* or spirit to be thought on the basis of *différance* as inscription, difference and deferral.

What interests Derrida then, is the movement, passage or *between* between the Good and the good, God and discourse, God and man, spirit and matter. It recalls how the empirical was needed to think the transcendental, the excluded to think reappropriation. This in turn allows *mimesis* to be understood as a quasi-transcendental structure. This quasi-transcendental, this place of crossing, of passage and of being-*between*, is a condition of possibility and impossibility for thinking not only Plato’s dialectic but also Hegel’s dialectic. As possibility: despite Plato’s condemnation of *mimesis* as a bad and dangerous art that substitutes the copy and the imitation for the original and true, he relies on this concept to underpin both *what is*, but also any discourse about *what is*, that is, *discourse itself*. It is a process of division and doubling to which man’s response is a repetition of the same process. Plato both prescribes and proscribes representation and *mimesis*. These structures seek to work within a restricted economy of exchange, where the Good gives (of itself) the good, where the intelligible materialises itself in the sensible. The process of exchange offers itself up in the form of dialectical union, or, as I shall elaborate, the process of dialectical reappropriation and the

movement of the *Aufhebung* in Hegel. As impossibility: what will become clear in the following chapters is that the relation itself, the 'third' which binds, is in excess of that which it binds, undoing the simple oppositions of intelligible/sensible, transcendental/empirical, Good/good. If there is a messianic tone to deconstruction it is perhaps a desire to save philosophy from its own desire to self-destruct, to self-consume with no remains. *Mimesis* problematises the movement of reappropriation, repetition and self-division, but in doing so it opens a space for that which is 'to come.' It does this by being itself divided, *necessarily* so. It prevents absolute reappropriation through what Derrida describes as an 'undecidable syntax of *more*.' As Gail Ormiston says, it

disrupts the mastery and confidence of the Hegelian *Aufhebung*, the sovereignty of a certain philosophical heritage oriented by the desire and mastery of consciousness to comprehend itself. *Différance* conditions and betrays the very deliverance of this lineage. The condition for the production of effects, differences, and nominal concretions, that is, the chain of substitutions, is *tropical*. The ordered delivery and comprehension of any word, term, phrase, or sign necessitate the turn or betrayal of the word – the 'linguistic' tradition – *by the word* turning-in-on-itself in a ceaseless and relentless troping of *mimesis*.⁴⁴

This 'ceaseless and relentless' 'turning-in-on-itself' no longer allows thing and word, concept and sign, to match in perfect symmetry. It allows for the repetition of no original, for production to flow from no source, for a discourse to be no longer produced by an origin, no longer the simple repetition of *what is*. In this way deconstruction disrupts the model of *adequatio* by focusing on the relation itself, on the movement of contamination, translation, the movement that binds and unbinds and in so doing adds itself without 'relief.'⁴⁵ Discourse no longer emanates from God, nor does it simply repeat the divine.

Fiction and Mimesis: Glas

If deconstruction in some way resembles negative theology it is because *différance*, a certain alterity and impossibility, is exempt from every process of presentation, so that it differs and

⁴⁴ 'The Economy of Duplicity: *Différance*,' (Wood & Bernasconi, 1988), 41.

⁴⁵ Derrida translates the German *Aufhebung* into *relever*, which in turn is translated as 'relief' in the English translation of *Glas*.

defers from itself. It too “sends out delegates, representatives, proxies” but here “without any chance that this giver of proxies might ‘exist,’ might be present, be ‘itself’ somewhere” (M, 21). As was shown earlier with regard to the concepts of origin and law, it is no longer decidable what is an example of what: is the good produced by the Good or is the Good produced by that which represents it? Is Christ the example and sign of God, or is God a concept that can exist only through its incarnation in Christ? Différance produces, and is produced by, this crisis of exemplarity, “[w]hen we cannot tell which way the mimesis goes” (Caputo, 1997, 52). I hope to show that for Derrida this question of exemplarity and *mimesis* cannot be settled. Instead, it is this undecidability of exemplarity itself that is productive, this tension between the origin and example, the point at which, as Caputo suggests, it can no longer be known ‘what gives’ (Caputo, 1997, 165). Derrida’s understanding of *mimesis* prevents thinking of philosophy as a discourse that in some way mirrors the reality of *what is*, a repetition produced and prescribed by an origin. This points to the quasi-transcendental fictional writing that Derrida seeks. No longer a divinely prescribed repetition, *mimesis* allows for saying the new or the impossible, for that which has not been always already determined by the totality and whose rules and chance have not been always already prescribed. In this sense it is a fiction that is not imaginary, that which belongs to no category but rather plays along and between the borders between truth and the imaginary, philosophy and literature, the serious and the nonserious. *Glas* is a text that belongs to neither philosophy nor literature because it challenges the very concept of belonging. Derrida says it

is neither philosophy nor poetry. It is in fact a reciprocal contamination of the one by the other, from which neither can emerge intact. This notion of contamination is, however, inadequate, for it is not simply a question of rendering both philosophy and poetry *impure*. One is trying to reach an additional or alternative dimension beyond philosophy and literature. In my project, philosophy and literature are two poles of an opposition and one cannot isolate one from the other or privilege one over the other. I consider that the limits of philosophy are also those of literature. In *Glas*, consequently, I try to compose a writing which would traverse, as rigorously as possible, both the philosophical and literary elements without being definable as either. Hence in *Glas* one finds classical philosophical analysis being juxtaposed with quasi-literary passages, each challenging, perverting and exposing the impurities and contradictions in their neighbour; and at some point the philosophical and literary trajections cross each other and give rise to something else, some *other* site. [...]

I am trying to produce new forms of catachresis, another kind of writing, a violent writing which stakes out the faults and deviations of language; so that the text produces a language of its own, in itself, which while continuing to work through tradition emerges at a given moment as a *monster*, a monstrous mutation without tradition or normative precedent (Kearney, 1984, 122-23).

This monstrous writing operates on/in the margins or borders as a writing that seeks to explore those margins and thus necessarily exceeds what is contained and held back by them. It allows for “a certain practice of fiction, the intrusion of an effective simulacrum or of disorder into philosophical writing” (A, 39). It is concerned with the borders themselves as “divisible” (Kearney, 1984, 111), something which *Glas* enacts in its typography and the staging of a confrontation between philosophy and literature in the form of Hegel and Genet. For Derrida, the border “precedes, as it were, the determination of all the dividing lines [...]: between a fantasy and a ‘reality,’ an event and a non-event, a fiction and a reality, one corpus and another.”⁴⁶ The border itself, the margin or the *between*, makes it possible to think that which is distinct, to think opposition. At the same time, this border is itself divided, thinkable perhaps only through opposition and through distinction.

In question here then is the border that makes opposition possible and impossible. If philosophy and literature have been conceptually determined as representations of an idea, and if commentary or critical rejoinders are determined as responses to these original texts that are repetitions of original ideas, then perhaps *Glas* demonstrates what happens when these models of *adequatio* are put into question. That is, it questions the relation of *adequatio* as a relation, as a passage or point of connection and disconnection between two sides of an opposition. I disagree with Simon Critchley when he says that Derrida employs “an implicit conception of truth as *adequatio* between text and commentary.”⁴⁷ It seems to me that *Glas* disrupts that

⁴⁶ Jacques Derrida, ‘Living On; Borderlines,’ trans. James Hulbert (*Deconstruction and Criticism*, 1995, The Continuum Publishing Company, New York), 83.

⁴⁷ Simon Critchley, ‘A Commentary upon Derrida’s Reading of Hegel in *Glas*’ in *Hegel After Derrida* (ed. Stuart Barnett, 1998, Routledge, London), 198.

model, offering not one version or one interpretation of Hegel's texts but a multiplicity of diverse readings, sometimes of the same passages taken from Hegel, sometimes of different passages, combining the same and different works into a palimpsest rather than a linear and homogenous reading. It problematises the relation between repetition and original through non-referencing, undermining citation as repetition of an original. And that is because the texts of Hegel are the same that is not identical. The texts of Derrida are the same that is not identical. *Glas* seeks to articulate this. It is a writing that seeks to explore the border and margins and thus necessarily exceeds what is contained by those borders.

Glas tells of this complexity of relations, contaminations, differences and convergences. If Derrida's work has an affinity with Hegel's *Aufhebung*, it is not because he desires to attain absolute knowledge, nor because *différance* can dialectically resolve, exceed and reappropriate absolute knowledge into itself. What made Hegel, for Derrida, "the last philosopher of the book and the first thinker of writing" (OG, 26) also points the way to Derrida as the next philosopher of writing. Derrida is interested in the margin between the truth and what is considered to be outside of that truth. This marginality, *différance*, relations, the *between*, inscribes opposition, is a condition for truth and for the appearance of truth. Deconstruction tells of the necessity of exemplarity and representation, that without them, *what is* cannot appear to itself. In this way, deconstruction remains

open as to whether, to say it in classical language, the irrepresentable of *envois* is what produces the law (for example the prohibition of representation) or whether it is the law which produces the irrepresentable by prohibiting representation. [...] Perhaps law itself outreaches any representation, perhaps it is never before us, as what posits itself in a figure or composes a figure for itself. (The guardian of the law and the man from the country are 'before the law,' *Vor dem Gesetz*, says Kafka's title, only at the cost of never coming to see it, never being able to arrive at it. It is neither presentable nor representable [...]) The law has often been considered as that which puts things in place, posits itself and gathers itself up in composition (thesis, *Gesetz*, in other words what governs the order of representation), and autonomy in this respect always presupposes representation, as thematization, becoming-theme. But perhaps the law itself manages to do no more than transgress the figure of all possible representation.

Which is difficult to conceive, as it is difficult to conceive anything at all beyond representation, but commits us perhaps to thinking altogether differently.⁴⁸

As Derrida suggests, it is difficult to conceive anything beyond or outside of representation, and that perhaps includes *différance*. As I said at the beginning of this introduction, philosophy thinks of *what is* as its ideal, but in so doing it binds itself to the outside of *what is*, to *what is not*. Deconstruction, alongside its interrogation of the concept of *mimesis*, allows for thinking the nature of this bind, about what makes representation both possible and impossible, its necessity and its limitations. In this way, deconstruction can begin to imagine a writing which reinscribes these limitations, these points of excess and the margins at the fringe of representation.

In order to explore this possibility, what follows is a reading of Derrida's reading of Hegel, an 'unfolding' of Derrida's 'unfolding' of Hegel. Hegel's dialectic is constructed through the layering of multiple movements over one another such that it works on different, yet interacting, levels at the same time. *Glas* acts to unfold these layers while at once exposing their proliferation and contamination through Derrida's own layering or grafting of Hegelian texts upon one another. And from the start I want to make clear that I am not seeking to offer 'a reading of Hegel' but 'a reading of Derrida reading Hegel.' I want to draw out what catches Derrida's attention in the Hegelian text, what this tells him about metaphysics, and in turn what this can tell the reader of Derrida about Derrida's own texts. For what Derrida learns from Hegel is, I believe, the importance of the act of presenting or presentation, this in turn suggesting the importance he attaches to writing and to his own acts of presentation.

The first chapter is concerned with examining a first layer, the general structuring of the dialectic. It offers an introduction to Derrida's reading of Hegel in both *Glas* and 'Outwork,' exploring the presentation of the introduction to philosophy.

⁴⁸ Jacques Derrida, 'Sending: On Representation,' trans. Peter & Mary Ann Caws (*Social Research*, 1982, Vol.49, no.2), 325-26.

[T]he problem of the introduction in/to Hegel's philosophy is *all* of Hegel's philosophy: (the) *already* posed throughout, especially in his prefaces and forewords, introductions and preliminary concepts. So, already, one would be found entrained in the circle of the Hegelian beginning, sliding or endlessly atrip there (G, 4a).

Crucially, it is presentation that introduces philosophy to itself. Hegelian spirit divides in order to recognise itself in its freedom. This manifestation is tied to the problematics of time, to the place of negativity and the outside, the oppositions between the intelligible and the sensible, spirit and matter. The second chapter will be concerned with expanding on Derrida's reading of the place of the secondary in the dialectic. It will be particularly concerned with exploring the value and function of metaphor and Derrida's interpretation of a necessary contamination between what the dialectic thinks of as its 'inside' and its 'outside.' In this way, Derrida suggests that relations and differences are conditions of possibility, and impossibility, for thinking absolute knowledge.

These examinations will take place in the context of the Hegelian family. *Glas* makes much of the family, and it is through this that the connection between the dialectic and *mimesis* can be most profoundly felt. In Chapter Three then, I want to explore the possibility that it is *mimesis*, in conjunction with the metaphors of paternity and filiation, that explains how the origin can produce that which represents it, how it can divide itself such that it can know itself, that determines the role and value of the 'outside,' of representation, metaphor, and so forth. *Mimesis* has several capacities: it is an instance of the law or of the order of order. At the same time, *mimesis* is a law, and it is also the way in which the law repeats itself. Moreover, *mimesis* is a concept that pervades the basic philosophemes and metaphors of philosophy, establishing an analogical relation between knowledge and sight, paternity and filiation. And finally, I hope to show that, for Derrida, *mimesis* is also *différant*, a concept-non-concept that is divided from itself and that puts in question the structures of representation and reappropriation upon which Hegel depends. This series of possibilities will perhaps allow for the thinking of a writing that functions outside the categories of the ontological and is no longer bound by the laws of representation.

Chapter One: Hegel and Presentation

1.1 The Time of the Encyclopedic Circle

The question at issue here, precisely, is that of presentation. (D, 3)

In 'Outwork,' the preface to *Dissemination*, Derrida explores the status and function of prefaces. He does so with specific regard to Hegel's use of the preface, as that which both does, and does not, belong to the *proper* space of philosophy. Put simply, Hegel's dialectic is a response to the problem of opposition and to the need to overcome opposition in order to regain the unity of spirit in absolute knowledge. One such opposition is that of the preface to *proper* philosophy and to proper philosophical exposition. For there is a conflict between the need for philosophy to present itself, to be accessible to man's understanding, and its duty to be, in truth, beyond this finitising, reductive, formalist necessity. Derrida is particularly interested in how this opposition belongs to the chain governed by the opposition of inside and outside; that is, how it is governed by the belief that the presentation of truth is (the) outside of the truth itself. In both 'Outwork' and *Glas* he draws attention to the complexity of this relation and to the importance it has for Hegel. For while the question of the preface may appear to be marginal to proper philosophical issues, it is granted importance by both Hegel and Derrida precisely because of its marginality, because it is a question of the relation or margin between philosophy and its outside. If, for Hegel, the preface operates on the margins of truth, for Derrida it is a matter of exploring what this marginality might mean, of locating where and to what this margin belongs. In other words, it is a matter of understanding the relation provided by that which acts as a margin *between* truth and nontruth, *between* philosophy and that which acts as a mere accessory to it. And as I hope to show, understanding this relation between inside and outside, between truth and that which presents it, interests Derrida because it determines the very identity of speculative philosophy.

Hegel's Time

Hegel declares in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* that “our time” is the “right” time for philosophy to be raised to the status of a Science, to become Philosophy: “ours is a birth-time and a period of transition to a new era,” the need for such a transition making itself felt in the diremptions of modern culture, in “frivolity and boredom,” the “foreboding of something unknown”.¹ Within the Hegelian system however, such indications must not simply be ascribed to the empirical vagaries of history, to the whims of man, which could lead one to suspect that now may not be quite the right time after all, or that there may be other, equally ‘right’ times. In order to sustain his thesis of absolute knowledge, Hegel must deprive the natural, immediate, ‘now’ of its arbitrary and autonomous character by showing that it belongs to, and is a consequence of, the concept’s self-development in time. In other words, it must not simply be a case of man, a man such as Hegel, determining ‘now’ as the right time for philosophy. This ‘now’ must be spiritually rooted. In order to secure his thesis of spirit as a totality, Hegel must legitimate the existence of all that opposes itself to spirit: untruth, nonreason, the arbitrary and contingent. This extends right down to the need to explain why there is a division between truth and presentation, philosophy and the preface. For Derrida, this problematic will be all of Hegel’s philosophy, whose job it becomes to account for and give relief to such oppositions and additions by making them belong to spirit. Hegel has to prove that philosophy is made possible and legitimated by a higher order, the *already* of spirit. He has to show that spirit has determined that ‘now’ is the right time because the ‘now’ is a product of spirit and belongs to spirit as a part of its own methodology. The preface too will find its place, and thereby its legitimation, in this chain. By explicating this relation between spirit and philosophy, Hegel can legitimate the very existence of his own philosophy and its presentation or methodology: speculative philosophy will repeat and imitate the natural movement of spirit in its own movement.

¹ G.W.F Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (1977, Oxford University Press, Oxford), section. 11.

Derrida thus sets about exploring this link between man's time and spirit's time which is so important to the success of Hegel's philosophy. Hegel must establish what Derrida describes as a "double topography," (D, 13) a concept of time that allows for both the empirical and historical *and* for the transcendental and spiritual, or what Hegel calls "external" and "internal" necessities (D, 11-12). And as is clear, this relation is absolutely dependent upon what Derrida thinks of as the fundamental opposition of opposition itself, the opposition between inside and outside. As I will show, this opposition tallies up with a series of other oppositions, such as those between spirit and history, the transcendental and empirical. It thus offers one of Derrida's most unflagging sites of interest as it forms a point of convergence for many of the philosophical staples that Derrida calls into question.

The Circle of Unity

For Hegel, reason is not something that exists outside of man; knowledge is concerned with the in-itself as it is for mankind, with the phenomenal world as an external manifestation of the Idea. Things exist in-themselves but what makes the object truly itself is also what turns it toward man, for the principle of its being is one with the root of man's subjectivity, spirit. The in-itself *is* the in-itself only *for* consciousness. Rather than coerce spirit into line with human subjectivity, the rational totality requires the latter for its full disclosure; it belongs to the freedom and necessity of the Idea that it should come to consciousness of itself, and it does so in the mind's gradual achievement of an awareness of itself which is none other than an awareness of the truth. The aim is to reach the point where knowledge no longer needs to go beyond itself, when Notion and Object correspond and "appearance becomes identical with essence" (Hegel, 1977, section 89). The speculative project is oriented towards relieving man's self-alienation, an internal division which manifests itself in the diremptions of thought and culture. Philosophy therefore sets about healing the division that has fractured the original, spiritual unity of the in-itself and thought. In Derrida's words, "[o]ne divides itself in two, such is the distressing source of philosophy [...].

Therefore reason proceeds to busy itself thinking the wound, to reduce the division, to return this side of the source, close by the infinite unity ” (G, 95a).

Importantly then, for Hegel speculative philosophy is no longer dependent upon externalities or outward experience, nor is it checked by an inadequation between subject and object, but needs only look to itself, to the way in which the mind comes to knowledge. Through the “education of consciousness” the mind learns to distinguish and dismiss false *presentations* of the object, those in which object and notion do not match, so that “consciousness provides its own criterion from within itself” (Hegel, 1977, section 80). Only when consciousness grasps its own essence will it “signify the nature of absolute knowledge itself” (Hegel, 1977, section 89). To begin with spirit is to end with spirit, a culmination in absolute knowledge which is nothing other than self-knowledge, an absolutely transparent presence to self. The theoretical enterprise becomes a retrieval of that primordial act by which the subject posits itself, a “science of the experience of consciousness ” (Hegel, 1977, section 88) .

Absolute knowledge thus forms a circle of self-appropriation and return to complete self identity. If consciousness does not have to appeal to an outside authority for validation, it is because it has already introjected any such authority. For the system of Absolute knowledge to be complete, the jurisdiction it exerts over the world (or itself) must be extended at the same time over its own preconditions. The discourse of absolute knowledge would otherwise never get going since whatever it took off from would be anterior and extrinsic to it, thus threatening the ‘absoluteness’ of the system. Simply by beginning that work would put its transcendental status at risk. Instead, philosophy must somehow already always have begun, or at least exist in some perpetual present, utterly contemporary with its object. The act of theorising itself must be the first postulate of the system, functioning as both origin and telos.

There is a *not yet* of philosophy. Philosophy – already – is announced in it. Now reason's and thus Hegelian philosophy's essential proposition: philosophy has its beginning only in itself. Philosophy is the beginning, as the beginning of (it)self, the posit(ion)ing by (it)self of the beginning. How are these two axioms to be reconciled: philosophy only proceeds from/by itself, and yet is the daughter of a need or an interest that are not yet philosophy?

In its own proper position, philosophy *presupposes*. It precedes and replaces itself in its own proper thesis. It comes before itself and substitutes for itself. A *pro* movement (G, 95a).

For Derrida this strange twisting of temporality means that speculative philosophy has to exist in a state of anticipation. This '*pro movement*' allows for formal pre-cipitation: in anticipating its destination, speculative philosophy determines a priori the structure of all that will follow: "method is nothing but the structure set forth in its pure essentiality" (Hegel, 1977, section 28). The Hegelian system cancels out futurity, "makes the future present, represents it, draws it closer, breathes it in, and in going ahead of itself puts it ahead. The *pre* reduces the future to the form of manifest presence" (D, 7). In this sense, anticipation becomes recapitulation, a return. Similarly, the '*pre-*' itself is pre-determined by what is ahead of it. For it is only within a synthetic unity that a '*pre-*' can function as what determines both telos and origin, and at the same time be itself determined by this determination. It is governed by the very law it makes possible. So that if speculative philosophy in some sense rushes ahead of itself, anticipates the moves it is yet to make, and does so according to a logic of re-appropriation, this logic itself is constructed out of the very determinations that it has yet to make possible. Pre-cipitation and after-effect are here homogenous and continuous (D, 20). Consequently, the time of the concept is that of circularity. As Derrida says, "if logic needs no lemma, it is because, beginning with conceptual thought it must also end with conceptual thought, and because it does not know all there is to know about scientificity, the concept of which will be its ultimate acquisition. And yet that concept must already be its premise" (D, 19). This absolute already-there of the not-yet no longer belongs to 'time,' or at least not to *our* time; it describes an eternal or intemporal circle (G, 218a). This is the internal necessity of the concept, as that which binds and maintains unity according to the

telos of absolute knowledge which guarantees itself through the very act of (pre-)supposing and positing itself.

At the same time however, because absolute knowledge is not something that simply exists 'out there' *as such*, latent and awaiting discovery, this anticipation demands participation. Knowledge is absolutely bound to the process of its becoming, they are one and the same. The necessity of man for the completion of this circle thrusts spirit back into 'our' time, thus creating a gap between the formal notion of time in which the concept moves and empirical or historical time as linear. "The *external* necessity [...] lies in the shape in which time sets forth the sequential existence of its movements" (Hegel, 1977, section 5). This gap between the 'essential' time of the concept and 'our' time forces the Hegelian system to endure certain supplements to the self-progression of the concept, such as the preface.

The Preface

since *our time* is not exactly, not simply propitious for an elevation, since it is not yet quite the right time, since time, at any rate, is not equal to itself, it is still necessary to prepare it and make it join up with itself by didactic means (D, 12).

If the path of science is itself science, then method is no longer an external, preliminary consideration. According to the self-progression of the concept, truth should present itself by itself, the concept should be a self-engendering, living historicity. But since both man and time are not quite equal to themselves, the gap between conceptual history and empirical history opens up a division which speculative philosophy must reduce. Whilst the philosophical process should act as its own presentation, mankind sometimes needs a little help in order to be introduced to what is in front of him: "one must bring the being-there back to the concept of which it is the temporal, historical presence or, in circular fashion, introduce the concept into its own being-there." (D, 12). Such is, for example, the necessity of the preface. Within the Hegelian system, it

comes about in response to an empirical, didactic, external necessity. Happening like an accident to truth, it operates as a supplement, an addition. However, in the same way as the concept is pushed from conceptual time into empirical time in order to think itself, so the exposition of philosophy similarly necessitates that the concept be accessible to this process of thinking. And just as, when thought finally meets up with itself in absolute logic there will be no distinction between the thought and thinking, the idea and the in-itself, so the preface is written in view of its own self-effacement: the end of the preface marks the end of history and the beginning of philosophy, it is simply formal refuse, an empirical husk of the concept (D, 11). The necessity of the preface is external to the extent that it comes about in response to empirical needs. But Hegel makes the whole of philosophy historically essential, part of the evolution of spirit. This allows Hegel to secure philosophy in an historical ground without laying it open to the accusation of external determination, since this history itself is the product of the very spirit which moves the discourse, and so is included within itself. The preface is internal to philosophy to the extent that the exteriority of the negative (falsehood, death, empirical time) *belongs* to the process of truth and must leave its trace upon it. This necessity allows speculative thought to *scientifically* think out the opposition between science and its other (D, 22), but only after the 'pre-' has determined this mode of thinking as *itself* scientific.

For Hegel then, truth does not simply come in the form of constative propositions but is inseparable from the rhetorical performance of the theory itself. If division and contradiction, the necessity of the preface and the after-word, are essential moments of the Idea's self-progression through time, it is because Hegel has subsumed the historical, empirical diremptions which bring about the need for philosophy, and which in turn threaten to relativise it, into the theory itself, converting its preconditions into the dialectical form. Whilst propositional logic is, on the one hand, opposed to the discursivity of the preface, on the other hand, the necessity and subsequent sublation of the preface offers an example of the performance of the system itself. The constative

dimension is not in contradiction with the descriptive dimension of this history because the absolute contains such elements as part of its passage through time and the necessity of thinking itself. So that, if it is true that philosophy is only needed because of false consciousness, it is equally true that false consciousness must itself be necessary in order to redeem philosophy from a merely contingent status. The preface is subsumed back into the totality, an empirical error that belongs to the trajectory of truth. The logic of what Derrida describes as Hegel's 'Encyclopedia' means that particular, finite, empirical discourses are subsumed into the totality of the Book (D, 47). Speculative philosophy acts as a metadiscourse that unites the regional sciences.

In 'Outwork' Derrida shows how Hegel's system appears dialectically to resolve the opposition between inside and outside, or philosophy and presentation, and to legitimate itself in the process. The time of man belongs to and is a product of conceptual time, and the linking up of these two times can be anticipated in the unity of absolute knowledge. Philosophy prevents history, the outside, untruth, from being merely empirical, since they belong to the path to knowledge. At the same time, the empirical prevents philosophy from being simply an addition since this is the way that spirit thinks itself. Through one and the same movement, Hegel is able to legitimate negativity or the outside *and* the need for and structure of philosophy. The anticipated and at-once 'always-already' unity of spirit means that all such diversions on the path to truth can be reabsorbed and reappropriated back into the system, detours that belong to the process of truth and that leave a trace upon that process but which, essentially, do not taint the integrity of that truth.

1.2 The Necessity of Opposition

[T]he *as*, the *comme*, the *as such* of the essentiality, of the essential property or propriety, since it raises only in crossing out, is itself the *as* only insofar as other than what it is [...]. The *as* appropriates itself only in expropriation (G, 13a) .

The Aufhebung

According to the logic of internal and external necessities just outlined, instead of simply excluding false knowledge, which would threaten to relativise absolute knowledge by leaving it in opposition with something that exists outside of it, Hegel renders “untruth” necessary to the very process and movement of the concept. This says two things about Hegel’s system; firstly, that spirit itself has determined ‘now’ as the right time for science; secondly, that the system of absolute knowledge can cope with negativity, such as the need for the preface. Rather than being maintained as a threat posed from the outside, the system of absolute knowledge accords negativity a place in the system, thereby neutralising its threat. Hegel determines this difference between truth and negativity as contradiction, and resolves this contradiction through the sublation of the negative term. For this to take place, true and false knowledge cannot be accorded an equal status. In order that the preface or external necessity is sublated, and not the other way around, the law of oppositions must ensure that one of the terms is hierarchically lower than the other, that it *issues out of* and *belongs to* its opposing other. Hegelian logic thus moves in the dialectical form of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Through the *Aufhebung*, the sublation or the ‘relief’ of antithesis, negation is rendered intrinsic to positivity.

To relieve the terms of the opposition, the effects of division, such would be the “interest of reason”, the unique interest of philosophy. The progress of culture has led to oppositions of the type spirit/matter, soul/body, faith/understanding, freedom/necessity, and all those deriving from these back toward the great couple reason/sensibility or intelligence/nature, that is, “with respect to the universal concept, under the form of absolute subjectivity and absolute objectivity.” Now these oppositions are posited as such by the understanding that “copies” reason. So this enigmatic relation, this rational *mimesis*, organises the whole history of philosophy as the history of need, the history of reason’s interest in relieving the two. Reason is another name for the power of unification. When this force grows weaker or disappears, the need of/for philosophy makes itself felt. (G, 95a)

Oppositional thought comes about as a product of, and as an imitation of, the fundamental opposition between subject and object, the very wound that reason gives itself the task of healing. The activity of the *Aufhebung* provides the 'working-through,' and the (re-)union, of each determinate opposition, the whole movement organised according to the telos of the absolute unity of subject and object. So the *Aufhebung* is a healing movement. But this poses a fundamental difficulty: if spirit simply sets out to heal oppositions or contradictions then it is hard to see why, since spirit is absolute, it tolerates the division into oppositional thought, why it gives rise to the opposition between subject and object in the first place. Why would spirit allow thought to 'wander' if this detour or division were not absolutely necessary to it, and not simply a *consequence* of man's self-alienation? The risk is this: if division is not absolutely necessary to spirit, unification then appears to be a kind of after-effect, a *response* by spirit to the threat of negativity which, in effect, places negativity in the position of something that exists 'out there' which then breaks into the system. To counter this accusation Hegel needs a transcendental argument that holds the necessity of division in place, an argument that doesn't simply attribute diremption or 'untruth' to empirical chance or the whims of subjectivity (which it can then re-absorb *after* the event) but makes it *belong* to the system and *mean* something. The accident to truth must be *productive, necessary, and meaningful* from the first. Put simply, there must be a reason why spirit allows negativity to *be*, the accident must *belong* to the essence.

The Mediation of Identity

What then, is the necessity behind negativity? The answer is to be found in the ways in which positivity and negativity are made to co-exist in the system, that is, in the movement of the *Aufhebung*. For the *Aufhebung* is not simply the movement of negation; it also entails conservation, negates and conserves at the same time. Whilst ridding knowledge of untruth, the *Aufhebung* also allows it to retain the history of this movement and this is vital. Through the movement of the concepts of freedom and recognition, concepts contained within the workings of

the *Aufhebung*, this history in turn forms the positive identity of spirit. The diremptions of modern culture do not threaten the absoluteness of spirit, but belong to it as essential moments of its own determination of itself. What begins to emerge then, is that the structure of philosophy, as including within itself empirical or formalist moments which can be relieved (such as the preface), is imitative of the structure and workings of the totality.² Oriented by a departure from and an anticipated return to the origin (absolute spirit), the concepts of freedom and recognition grant division a transcendental necessity, as that which belongs to spirit rather than as symptomatic of a dis-unified origin. So that whilst spirit is what exists, it is at the same time active:

activity is its essence; it is its own product, and is therefore its own beginning and its own end. Its freedom does not consist in static being, but in constant negation of all that threatens to destroy freedom. The activity of spirit is to produce itself, to make itself its own object, and to gain knowledge of itself; in this way it exists for itself (Hegel, quoted in G, 24a).

Spirit (re-)finds itself through dialectical mediation, the passage of the *Aufhebung* as it produces the identity of identity and nonidentity (G, 24a). The unity of spirit divides and opposes itself to itself such that it can become an object-for-self. This mediation is absolutely crucial, one can only know freedom by knowing what it is to be a slave: "if the spirit knows that it is free, it is altogether different than what it would be without this knowledge [...] It is the felt sensation of freedom alone which makes spirit free, although it is in fact always free in and for itself" (Hegel, quoted in G, 25a).¹ Division thus becomes necessary in order for the felt-sensation of unification, in which spirit can recognise itself as what it is. As Derrida says, if spirit remained abstract it would "strangulate itself in singularity." Rather, spirit "can know itself and become actual only insofar as it objectifies itself. This objectification produces itself through the 'form of its

² This thesis will be an exploration of what 'imitative' means in this context. In *Glas*, Derrida describes this relation as one of 'rational *mimesis*' (G, 95a, cited on the previous page).

moments.' In becoming an object for itself, spirit issues from, goes out of, itself. But it does this in order to remain (in) itself, to return to and become equal to itself" (G, 14-15a).

Spirit Versus Matter

Spirit is absolute. As absolute it can have no opposite. Attaining the felt sensation of freedom is thus problematic since spirit, as the totality of what *is*, cannot be dominated. Thankfully, relief is at hand. Hegel puts into play the opposition that Derrida thinks is so important to philosophy, that of inside/outside, intelligible/sensible. For out of habit, Hegel says, man opposes spirit to matter. This habit is revealing. In contrast to the absolute freedom or autonomy of spirit, matter is not free, it is 'stuff,' has weight, gravity. There is a law to this gravity: the elements of which it is composed search for unity.

Speculative philosophy has shown that freedom is the one authentic truth of spirit. Matter possesses gravity in so far as it is impelled to move toward a central point; it is essentially composite, and consists entirely of discrete parts which all tend toward a centre; thus matter has no unity; it thus endeavours to relieve itself and seeks its own opposite. If it were to succeed, it would no longer be matter, but would have ceased to exist as such; it strives towards ideality, for unity is its ideal existence. Spirit, on the other hand, is such that its centre is within itself; it too strives towards its centre, but it is itself this centre. Its unity is not something external; it always finds it within itself, and exists in itself and (close) by itself. Matter has its substance outside spirit; spirit, on the other hand, is being-(close)-by-itself which is the same thing as freedom. For if I am dependent, I am beholden to something other than myself, and cannot exist without this external other thing. I am free if I am (close) by myself (Hegel, quoted in G, 23a).

Matter is only itself, matter, inasmuch as it strives toward unity, and thus only inasmuch as it becomes what it is not, spirit. In itself, it has no essence and thus it *is not, is not being* since only *spirit is (being)*. As a result, matter strives to be spirit: for it to exist, for it to have being, matter will already have become spirit. As Derrida puts it, "to be, matter will-already-have-become spirit. And since matter will have been nothing before becoming spirit, spirit will always have preceded or accompanied itself up to the procession's end. Matter precedes or remains (first or last) only as spirit: in raising or erecting what falls (to the tomb)" (G, 23-4a). Since it will not

have been anything before becoming spirit, matter exists as the expression, testament or monument to, the spirit that moved it. So that while spirit has, strictly speaking, no opposite, it passes in and out of matter. Spirit disperses itself in what constrains it, in what acts as its opposite. It creates the phenomenal experience of its freedom in order to appear to itself as such (G, 25a). Through this movement, spirit becomes the truth of matter.

Now, Derrida says that one of the things that makes this so difficult, even impossible, to grasp is the 'at-once' of this operation; since matter is not something other than spirit, spirit is the at-once of spirit and matter. It contains matter as its negativity. The *Aufhebung* holds together the opposition, the contradiction, and at-once divides it again: it is "indeed the contradiction of the contradiction and the noncontradiction, the unity as well of this contradiction" (G, 139a). Matter is a part of spirit; spirit opposes itself to matter, opposes itself to itself in order to give itself form; and since matter is nothing but spirit, spirit will always win out, the opposition will always favour what goes on to be the synthesis in the next 'moment.' So this division and departure from self is always at-once a return to self that was never, in truth, a departure: "the spirit returns to itself but without ever having left itself. A procession of returning (home). The limit was within it; the spirit was chaining up, contracting, imprisoning itself *within itself*. It always repeats itself" (G, 109a). This is a 'spatial' at-once; spirit dissociates or dissimulates itself into matter, into the sensible and the exterior, but since the exterior is at-once a part of the interior (spirit), exteriorisation is at-once interiorisation. The sensible *belongs* to the intelligible so that the opposition between inside/outside is overcome: the outside *belongs* to the inside. Which also means that at-once, the opposition is maintained: since the sensible or outside is relieved it remains the inferior term.³

³ Whatever *belongs*, rather than being that *to which* something belongs, is in a position of inferiority. In this case, the sensible is determined as having been produced *out of* and as *belonging to* the intelligible. It is nothing in its own right.

The Chain of Temporality

Each of these contractions or constrictions constitutes a 'formal moment' in the progression of spirit toward absolute knowledge. Each moment offers what resembles a 'freeze-frame' of spirit as it progresses and mediates itself. They capture a manifestation of spirit, a moment when it detaches itself into exteriority (which is still itself) such that it can reflect on itself as object for-self. For Derrida this means that, importantly, each moment is thus a determinate representative (G, 15a) of spirit in its positivity. Each moment acts as a particular totality in which the absolute totality comes to a halt, stops itself. This determinate totality retains, as a part of the whole, a certain permanence, a certain independence. In limiting itself, it gives itself form, the delay or arrest to the movement of the *Aufhebung* is the positive condition of spirit's appearing (to-itself as/in a moment in time and space). As Derrida says: "Without the delay, without suspensive and inhibiting constriction, the absolute would not manifest itself. So the delay is also an advance, progress, an anticipation, an encroachment on the absolute unfolding of the absolute" (G, 106a). The delay allows for manifestation and manifestation is crucial to self-knowledge.

Each finite repetition of this dialectical pattern thus forms a 'moment' in reason's infinite operation, but since the process of absolute knowledge (of absolute spirit) is ongoing, is not-yet what it is already, each moment breaks down into the next. The passage of the *Aufhebung* simultaneously provides closure to these particular, finite moments, and, through the immediate division or opposition of each synthetic unity into an/its other, makes each moment a part of the next. So the at-once also signifies the simultaneity of unification and division. The dialectical movement

at once repeats and anticipates, yet marks a jump, a leap, a rupture in the repetition, and all the while ensures the continuity of passage and the homogeneity of a development. A plurality of continuous jerks, of uninterrupted jolts – such would be the rhythm (G, 105a).

Every formal moment is thus the at-once of spirit giving itself (over as) form, permanence, product, result, *and* the dissolution of that result into the next moment. The difficulty lays in *thinking* these two functions together, resolution *and* dissolution: it is “an *Aufhebung*, the retention of what slips away as it slips away. This sort of historic screen or floodgate does not let what pass what passes, or lets pass what does not pass” (G, 10a). The *Aufhebung* is the movement of spirit in the act of mediating itself; it holds together contradiction *and* its resolution and does so in the permanence *and* transience of a moment.

The *Aufhebung* is not some determinate thing, or a formal structure whose undifferentiated generality applies itself to every moment. The *Aufhebung* is history, the becoming of its own proper presentation, of its own proper differentiating determination, and it is subject to the law, to the same law that it is the law of: it first gives itself as immediate, then mediatizes itself by denying itself, and so on. That it is subject to the law as it is the law of, that is what gives to the structure of the Hegelian system a very twisted form so difficult to grasp (G, 121a).

History is always on the move; this power of resolution, of representation, the giving over of a product, is not equal to the power of dissolution. The very birth of the presentation “contains the inborn germ of death” (G, 116a).⁴ The value of permanence is over-ridden by the necessity that each moment be put to work in forming the contradiction of the next.

[T]he *zugleich*, the *du-meme-coup*, the *at-once*, the in-the-same-stroke, the producing and the resolving of the contradiction do not remain together in the stroke. The *zugleich* is immediately divided, unbalanced, breaking the symmetry, the *meme-coup* worked (over) by two unequal forces. The resolving – also the dissolving – bests the producing. But only in order to prepare another stroke: the resolving is already in the act of producing another unheard-of contradiction in which the *zugleich* will separate from itself in order to reason against understanding (G, 19a).

Spirit comes to know more clearly what is proper to it through each stage of its development, so that the serial progression operates as a paring down and process of refinement. Spirit finds itself better in man than in the animal, better in religion than in the family, in philosophy than in

⁴ The context of this quotation is actually that of sexual difference but it applies to all differences, which must be relieved into synthesis and thus annulled or effaced.

religion. As such, although the relief of the inferior term or antithesis might make it seem that the dialectical method simply suppresses the weaker element, for Hegel this battle expresses an absolute necessity. As a finite or particular power, the greater term may well impose certain limitations, such as the constraints of family life compared to those of society, for example. But as it also offers the greatest refinement of spirit at that point as a point in (the) time (of the development of spirit), it also expresses the infinite power of spirit held back in it, the potential for refinement. As such, "the limitation is no longer negative; it opens a set of conditions of possibility, of existence, of life, the best ones possible at a given moment." (G, 106a). Each passage through opposition marks a positive step in the continual progression to absolute knowledge. So through the movement of the *Aufhebung* spirit becomes increasingly refined, increasingly itself. This passage of the *Aufhebung* constitutes history as the history of spirit's (be)coming home, reaching its telos of absolute (self) knowledge. The *Aufhebung* is always (re-)producing. A moment to be mediated and overcome, each finite representative of spirit is bound together by the concepts of memory, history and repetition; it provides the durability and permanence of the concept, allows it to find its way into 'tradition' as that which resists absolute loss and "constitutes the maintained ideality" (G, 122a). As determinate representatives of spirit, formal moments allow for the history of spirit to be read.

Matter is thus the exteriority of spirit that will (have) be(en) relieved. The *Aufhebung* provides the movement which allows the positive and negative, inside and outside, to fit together. The *Aufhebung* is therefore 'work,' producing itself out of, and giving itself the form of, history. And by drawing out this chain in Hegel's thinking Derrida shows how the act of presentation that occurs as a product of this movement or work is the act that makes meaning. It brings truth to the surface, thereby allowing spirit to know itself. Meaning does not exist independently of this act; spirit must incessantly repeat the moment of its constitution, the act of its posit(ion)ing. It is only by putting the 'outside' or negativity to work that meaning is possible. The process of emergence

is thus granted a transcendental necessity, which in turn legitimates all of spirit's detours through opposition and produces, as a kind of by-product, formal moments or idealities which in their turn allow man to read history as the History of spirit.

From this reading it seems plausible to suggest that for Derrida, Hegels' phenomenology can be thought of as the experience of seeing-through phenomena in order to know the spirit concealed beneath or within it. What also comes through is a sense of Derrida's respect for, as well as his awareness of the threat of, the cohesion of the Hegelian dialectic. The dialectic has a kind of philosophical tidiness. Hegel puts everything to work in the pursuit of the same end: without spirit's detour into the sensible or the 'outside,' the truth of spirit would remain unknown to spirit, and by the same token, to man. Spirit knows itself as free through the production of opposition, through restricting its freedom. Hegel can therefore legitimate the existence of what would otherwise threaten his system. Negativity, the 'outside,' and opposition, are *produced by, belong to, and are absolutely necessary to*, spirit. Hegel calls this relation between spirit and this series of oppositions dialectics, the positing/production of identity and relief through the *Aufhebung*. And it is this *Aufhebung*, or in other words, these *relations*, that are absolutely decisive in the realisation of absolute knowledge, and Derrida's deconstruction of it.

1.3 The Restricted Economy of the Hegelian Family⁵

I have examined Derrida's reading of the structure of the dialectic in a general sense. Now I want to narrow the frame a little by turning to a specific example of a formal moment. For set within his reading of the general structure of the dialectic, Derrida carries out a more thorough exploration of the tripartite relations of the dialectic in the context of the family. Indeed, throughout *Glas* the family is never far away. Now, on the one hand the family offers a specific 'example' of the movement of, and relations involved in, dialectics. Derrida's reading of it can therefore be taken to be a reading of just one example among others. But there is also more to it than this. For early on in *Glas* Derrida presents his choice of this example as divided and, as *Glas* weaves together various elements from the Hegelian corpus, it becomes increasingly clear the enormous and pivotal role the family plays in the composition of the Hegelian dialectic. Derrida is interested in the "dialectical syllogisms and the architectonics" (G, 4a) of the family, in understanding how the family composes itself and the role of recognition and freedom in this process. Recognition provides not only the movement of the syllogism, in other words, the mediation of the *Aufhebung*, but also the criterion by which the value of each successive moment is judged. The more spirit recognises itself in a formal moment, the better that moment. Derrida's question circles around what the recognition at work in the family offers to spirit, and whether this makes it more than one formal moment among others. That question will form the object of my second chapter. Before I can examine Derrida's response however, it is necessary to understand exactly how the family composes its identity and the relations that are at stake there. To that end, what follows is a close reading of Derrida's reading of the Hegelian family as formal moment, as an 'example' of spirit and as an 'example' taken from the system.

⁵ This title refers to what Derrida describes (in 'From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism without Reserve,' WD) as Hegel's restricted economy, a closed economy . . . that excludes chance and risk.

Hegelian Life

Nothing more painful, despite the appearance – but the evil here is appearance – than this return to self and this freeing of freedom. That is first produced in matter's becoming-alive, its becoming-life. In life, the spirit that had lost itself, dispersed according to the exteriority of matter, begins to relate itself to itself (G, 25a).

In the previous section I began to show how spirit invests itself in matter in order to think and to know itself, to return to itself in truer fashion. Spirit animates the rigid corporeality of matter. For Hegel biological life is simply a form of matter; spirit is what truly brings it to life: spirit is movement, energy, relation, the forging of unity. So that while essential life, spirit, may grow in and be dependent on biological life, these two forms of life are in no way the same thing: one can be alive without having 'life' in the Hegelian sense. Certain forms of matter or life are better representatives of spirit than others; each takes on its value according to the level of spirit invested in it, that is, according to the extent to which it has gone through the passage of the *Aufhebung*, the movement of self-recognition and self-knowledge constitutive of identity.

In this way human life is distinguished from animal life. This distinction repeats the earlier distinction between spirit and matter. For in animality there is, according to Hegel, a form of self-relation, *self-feeling*. This self feeling is an immediate and natural response to what are inwardly felt pressures. But the animal is only responding "to those external stimuli to which it is already inwardly susceptible; anything that does not match its inner being simply does not exist for it" (Hegel, quoted in G, 27a). The animal tries to free itself from this pressure by relieving it, by satisfying the need, but in this it is "merely a natural being at the mercy of immediate intuitions and pressures which [it] must satisfy and produce" (Hegel, quoted in G, 26a). Man too experiences this form of pressure, but as a unity man experiences it as a contradiction within the self that threatens that self. However, Hegel says, "I nevertheless am; this much I know, and I balance this knowledge against my feeling of negation or deficiency" (Hegel, quoted in G, 25a). It is this self knowledge that begins to make man *man*. Man has the ability to deny himself

satisfaction, to inhibit the pressure and so, through the process of self-recognition, become independent of his natural impulses. And as Derrida notes, “[i]n this power man becomes conscious and thinking. The process of idealization, the constitution of ideality as the *milieu* of thought, of the universal, of the infinite, is the suppression of the pressure ” (G, 26a). Man ceases to be at the mercy of immediate intuitions and pressures; he places the ideal, the realm of thought, between the demands of the pressure and their satisfaction. Consciousness and ideality mark and fill a breach or gap. What coincides in the animal, can be separated by man’s ability to think through the constitution of his identity, in other words, by the process of consciousness. Man’s independence comes with his ability to make a break with “his immediacy and naturalness.” (Hegel, quoted in G, 27a).

As such, the contrast between man and animal comes down to recognition. The animal’s “stimulation” (motivation, pressure, desire) comes from within itself, but only as what Derrida calls “an external or sensible automatic working” (G, 27a). In this way, the animal never goes out of itself, never forms a relationship with the object or itself, but simply develops what is immanent to it:

Dialectical paradox: natural living being, life as nature developing by itself without freedom insofar as its self-mobility is finite. It does not go out of itself, it does nothing but develop the germ: the quantitative increase without interruption, without relation to the outside and the absolute other. As natural necessity following its own bent, without freedom, its self-mobility is then the result of something other than self, is the result of something else precisely because it remains enclosed within itself and has no relation to self as to the other (G, 28-9a).

It is precisely by inhibiting the natural impulse within himself that man attains freedom. In the same way as spirit must create itself through its own activity, so man, as representative, must equally submit to this process: he must constitute his own identity, or remain as animal.

The qualitative leap would be brought about with the human individual: radically dividing itself, the human individual is conscious of itself as other. No longer having, by the fact of this division, its natural movement in itself, it constitutes itself by its *Bildung*, its culture, its discipline, its symbolic formation. Paradoxically, it is, more than the plant or animal, its own proper product, *its own son, the son of its works*. More than the plant or animal, the human individual is descended from its own *germ*. *It conceives itself*. Because it has interrupted the natural pressure and deprived itself of self-mobility, it has given itself law. It names itself, autonamedly (G, 29a, my emphasis).

It is only through transcending life as existence that essential life begins to be achieved. Through the departure from and return to self, man makes himself the result of himself, makes himself “what he should be; he must acquire everything for himself, precisely because he is spirit; in short he must throw off the natural. Spirit, therefore, is its own proper result ” (Hegel, quoted in G, 28a). Derrida thus emphasises that, for Hegel, life proper is a human sort of life; broken away from immediacy and naturalness, it is all the more natural for it is all the more proper.⁶ Man becomes his own proper product through his passage through the *Aufhebung*, through mediation and synthesis. And in accordance with the structure of the *Aufhebung* as a process of refinement, man becomes increasingly spiritual. As the son of his works, man is on a path of continual self-improvement, operating according to the telos of re-finding his own propriety and relieving the pressure of his inner division.

The Family

This path is formed by a series of finite totalities or formal moments, each then breaking down again to form the thesis of the next. One of these formal moments in spirit’s progression is that of the family. The family is, on the one hand, an ongoing empirical event: there are families. At the same time, since each empirical event belongs to the self-progression of spirit, the ideality of the family constitutes a formal moment: the family is “the first moment of the third moment of objective spirit, *sittlichkeit*’s first moment ” (G, 20a). Objective spirit is developed in three

⁶ An *ought* is implied here, that this is how nature *ought* to be rather than how it simply is.

moments: abstract right (*Recht*), morality (*Moralitat*), and ethics (*Sittlichkeit*, ethical life, objective morality) (G, 4a). *Sittlichkeit* is a binding, a unification: it is the synthesis of abstract good and abstract morality. Before *Sittlichkeit*, these two forms are not yet quite what they are: they do not yet exceed the limitations of subjectivity, have not passed out of themselves, been relieved into their other, and so they remain abstract, immobilised by their singularity. But “[i]n *Sittlichkeit* the Idea of freedom becomes actually present, is no longer in the head of subjective individuals” (G, 11a). This healing of the split between objectivity and subjectivity takes place in the institution. Just as spirit must constrict itself into opposition in order to gain true freedom, so it is only through the imposition of laws, of restrictions to freedom, that true freedom can be experienced by man. Since the process of refinement is ongoing, within *Sittlichkeit* itself a syllogism is in turn developed, its first term or institution being that of the family (the second term that of civil or bourgeois society, the third, the state or the constitution of the state G, 4a). *Sittlichkeit*, as that which defines the space into which the family is born, is a condition of possibility for the family.

Were there no families before this stage in spirit’s self-progression Derrida asks? (G, 34a). It can be assumed that prior to *Sittlichkeit* something like the family existed, that there were biological relations. But what *Sittlichkeit* allows for is the family *proper*, and within the Hegelian system it is, according to Derrida’s reading, impossible to separate the advent of this family from the birth of Christianity, that is, from the advent of (Christian) love and its distinction from Judaic mastery. A chain is formed: Hegel distinguishes the family *proper* firstly from animal reproduction and mere biological relations. The human family marks a break from the natural-biological group, and its identity is constituted through this break, in effect through the constitution of identity itself. Since it is established through mediation, through the recognition of self in the other, man’s reproduction is qualitative; its value lays in its non-quantitative enlargement, the spiritual growth that self-recognition brings about. This does not mean that the human family is beyond

nature: "Nature is not a determinate essence, a unique moment. It overlays all the forms of the spirit's exteriority to self. Nature appears then – while progressively disappearing therein – in each stage of the spirit's becoming" (G, 37a). But what it does mean is that while the family takes place in nature, it begins to have relations that are more than simply natural. So that while something like the family exists before *Sittlichkeit*, it is not the family *properly so-called*. Derrida thus marks out the ways in which what appears at first glance to be a rather general and familiar term, the 'family,' in fact signifies for Hegel a highly circumscribed signified. 'Family' means more than biological relations, and it can only be attained through the movement of the *Aufhebung*, that is, through self-relation, recognition and restrictions to freedom.

Hegel thinks the family in the context of religion. For as in every passage of the *Aufhebung*, each moment is formed in part from that which precedes it. So the family repeats itself, and improves itself through this repetition, each finite determination dissolving itself into the next determination of the family, and so on. For Hegel, the ideal ideality of the family, the family *proper*, only comes to pass in the Christian family; all its preceding determinations have composed the not-yet(s) of this already. They announce the path.

The Christian family relieves a natural family, the Jewish family, that itself relieves a more natural family. And each relief breaks with what it relieves, leaves between the other and itself a kind of margin that constitutes the truth of the other as the (past) essence whose truth the relief, for its part, gives to be read (G, 37a).

The human family relieves the animal (non-)family. But the ideality of the family is only reached in the Christian family, which usurps and replaces its "exact antithesis," the Jewish family. So "[t]here is *family* before *the* (Christian) family" but this family is yet to truly achieve and realise itself (G, 37a). In a movement which is now familiar, what comes to replace is always born out of that which it replaces. In a statement that is crucial to understanding Derrida's reading of Hegel, Derrida says that the "[t]ruth – the past-thought – is always the death (relieved, erected, buried,

unveiled, unbandaged) of what it is the truth of" (G, 32a). Christianity represents and anticipates itself in its *Vorstellung*, in Judaism, and Christianity, absolute religion, is/will be the *Vorstellung* of absolute knowledge as philosophy; it too will be replaced by what constitutes its truth.

Family Ties: Love Versus Law

Why is the Christian family placed at the top of this family tree? Because of love. The Jews do not know how to love, that is the Hegelian judgement that places the Jews in the position of antithesis. And as Derrida makes clear, this question of love is inseparable from that of the law; the love of Christ will replace, will relieve, the laws prescribed by the absent Jewish God. For Hegel, the Jews are still caught in the split between abstract right and morality; they err on the side of the law, obligation, duty: Judaism is not a revealed religion but a revealed law. The law prescribes and proscribes, but it provides no knowledge, no consciousness, no truth. "Since God does not manifest himself, he is not truth for the Jews, total presence or parousia. He gives orders without appearing" (G, 51a). For Hegel, there is an affiliation between Judaism and animality; Jewish feeling does not incarnate itself, does not go out of itself, "does not concretely, actually unite itself to the forms of understanding, of imagination, or of sensibility" (G, 47a). Without having an object to relate to, the infinite remains inaccessible, unthinkable; the Jews fixate upon an invisible infinite object, God, but do not know how to gain knowledge of the object of their attentions. Drawn to the invisible, they see only the visible; they are incapable of *feeling* the one in the other, of any relation between the two (as one). The Jews do not recognise spirit's being-at-home in the sensible. This invisibility very precisely determines the value of the Jewish faith;⁷

⁷ As I will examine later, the Jew is insensible, very precisely, to the comparative structure. They create the idol; Christianity will (have) replace(d) that with the infinite of love and beauty, will invest and animate the idol with spirit, bring it to life (G, 51a). The question I will be asking is what this *Aufhebung* of the law and its replacement by love has to do with the ability to see one thing in/as another, with the comparative structure, and with seeing as seeing (the) truth.

the Jews enslave themselves to an invisible God, they do not *see* the truth, they only obey the commands. Between them and this absent God, there is no legal or rational mediation, only heads of state, scribes giving empirical rules, precepts and commandments. Hegel's devaluation of the Jewish faith, and of Jewish relations, is determined by a supposed inability to *feel* the unity of spirit, an inability to relate to and see the truth.

(Christ's) Love is the *Aufhebung* of the law (G, 35a). In proposing love, Jesus does away with law, and at-once does away with its transgression. Not for the rather simple reason that since there are no laws they can no longer be transgressed. This is not a foray into lawlessness. Rather, Christ proposes the relief of law, of the law's formal legality. He preaches the fulfilment of what the law lacks, proposes not its dissolution but its completion. He opposes himself to the formal, thus indeterminate, indifferent opposition; opposition as such, of love to law, of law to nature (G, 58a). In uniting them all in the rupture of the law that is love, the opposition of law to freedom is de-bordered; one freely obeys the law. This doesn't operate as a simple interiorisation of the law's formality, a transportation of the law's formal structure from outside to inside the subject. Rather, it interrupts the exchange, the circulation of an eye for an eye, of retribution and equivalence. For abstract right and morality are unified in *Sittlichkeit*. No longer will one obey the law out of duty; one will desire to obey the law because one *feels* it. Since feeling comes about in the Christian family, the family will be the first site of this re-union, the first stage of *Sittlichkeit*. Love, as the feeling that unites the abstract right with morality, is thus the completion of the law. Love signals the lacks inherent in the Jewish 'non'-family, choosing to settle itself rather in the hearth of the Christian family. Derrida's reading thus emphasises that for Hegel, the 'general' term 'family' signifies the Christian family, and that other determinations of the family have been made to function in the Hegelian system as mere stages which lay the path for this development.

Marriage: Sexual Difference and Desire

Christian love plays a determining role in the identity of the *proper* family. And this love and this family cannot, for Hegel, be thought outside marriage. Marriage provides the medium or site in which two consciousnesses can recognise one another, gain recognition of themselves (as other), and thus become self-conscious. This is the syllogism, the movement of the *Aufhebung* which takes place *within* the moment itself. But it also provides the resources for the next moment. Now, I have shown how the concept of recognition determines the value of each family unit, thus causing the series of (non-) families to replace one another. The recognition at work *within* the Christian family ensures that this family is *the* family, the best and last in the line of families. For the process of recognition is 'maintained' in the Christian family, and this 'maintenance' forms the identity of that family: maintenance *as* desire, desire *as* maintenance. The first process of recognition *within* the family then, is between the spouses.

In marriage the (animal) desire to consume, to destroy through consumption, is suspended. This suspends the economy of simple exchange, the exchange of pressure for relief in which both parts have a kind of equivalence which makes them indistinguishable. Desire for the animal is felt as a natural pressure, and there is no distinction between the pressure and its relief, both are immanent to it. When this immobility is relieved into the self-mobility of Christian man, and more importantly, into marriage and the family, this desire is maintained as sexual desire. What keeps it *as* desire is its suspension in time: sexual desire is an *Aufhebung*; the suspension, the maintenance, the at-once of the contradictory desire to consume *and* to preserve. For Derrida then, desire very precisely says the structure of the *Aufhebung*. It is that which "limits in order to keep, denies in order to enjoy" (G, 123a). The object (of desire) does not simply escape destruction; rather, it stays *in* its destruction: "*Desire remains inasmuch as it does not remain. Operation of mourning: idealizing consum(mat)ing*" (G, 122a). Desire is mourning, the at-once of loss and preservation.

This secret of enjoyment that sacrifices itself, immolates itself to itself, say on the alter of enjoyment, in order not to destroy (itself), itself and the other, one for the other – essential un-enjoyment and im-potence – that is what Hegel calls love. The two sexes pass into each other, are one for and in the other – this constitutes the ideal, the ideality of the ideal (G, 124a).

What frees desire from enjoyment, from the consum(mat)ing pleasure, is love; and love finds its subsistence in marriage. As a form of mourning, the preservation of the desired object requires a (practical) monument. Marriage is this monument or product, the interiorisation of the exteriority of the monument. It constitutes the ideal ideality by holding together at-once the contradiction inherent in desire.

Marriage is the first moment of the family, the most natural and immediate moment of *Sittlichkeit*. Its essence is monogamy (G, 124a). It thus reveals the power of love over the law; the ‘thou shalt not commit adultery’ is replaced by love, one will no longer desire to commit adultery. Marriage is marriage to the extent that this desire is not contaminated by the ‘thou shalt not,’ the abstract judicial bond of the contract or formal legality.⁸ The law cannot bind, by rights, two living freedoms. What does bind them is, precisely, *Sittlichkeit* (as love). Love is the synthesis of good and right, it is “spirit’s *feeling* of its own unity” (Hegel, quoted in G, 17a). It is the moment of recognition of self as/in (the) other. Love comes onto the scene to relieve negativity; in loving the other I find in them what I lose in myself. If this repossession then makes love appear to have passed already into something else, a contract, a formal negotiation, and the family to have passed into law (and hence ‘backwards’ into the Jewish (non-family) or ‘forwards’ into the non-formal legality of society and the state) this leap is held in check by feeling: love is still feeling, it is not the unity of a law, but is still “ethical life in the form of the natural” (Hegel, quoted in G, 18a). In order for this to be the case, the movement of love has to

⁸ As Derrida says, “speculative dialectics always has the form of a general critique of the contract, or at least of the contractual formality, of the contract in the strict sense (G, 194a).

maintain itself in a dialectical contradiction; it must be maintained as love and then relieved by love.

For while the structure of sexual difference and desire maintains recognition, it does so only between two singularities. The being-one of the spouses, the consciousness of one in that of the other, such is the medium of exchange. This being-one *supposes* the *Aufhebung* of sexual difference; that is, the union of the spouses comes about as though they were the same sex, bisexual or asexual (G, 125a). Sexual difference is relieved and mastered in marriage. The two sexes make the whole, pass into each other, are one for and in the other. Under the form of love, this relief goes toward constituting the ideality, the ideality of the ideal. But the parents still must pass out of empiric singularity into the element of universality constitutive of ideality. The family is the movement of opposition (of opposites as they oppose each other in the process of recognition) *and* the opposites themselves (as singular consciousnesses), the difference *and* the differents (G, 118a). The struggle for recognition demands that consciousnesses must oppose each other, and in the case of the family (indeed, according to Derrida, *only* in the family) these consciousnesses are constituted as totalities (G, 135a). “In the family, *the totality of consciousness* is the same thing as what becomes *for self*, the individual contemplates himself in the other” (Hegel quoted in G, 136a). In order to advance the parents must relieve their singularity, their sexual difference and desire, into the ideal element of universality. “It is the child in which they recognise themselves as one, and precisely therein as relieved, and they intuit in the child this relief of themselves” (Hegel, quoted in G, 132a). As such, “[c]opulation relieves the difference: *Aufhebung* is very precisely the relation of copulation and the sexual difference” (G, 111a). The result of copulation, of this *Aufhebung* of desire, is the child. Conception is the union of two relieved into a single-one (G, 114a). Since the child is the manifestation of the union, it is only with parenthood that the ideality of the family truly comes to pass. The child is the truth of marriage as the truth of a synthesis.

The Child

The child is the product, and thus the manifestation, of all that takes place within a *proper* marriage; the love and copulation of the spouses, the bearing and raising of children. But the law of the *Aufhebung* also dictates that this raising of the child, its birth and education, will also be, *must* also be, the death of the parents and thus of the family, a necessity if the passage to absolute *Sittlichkeit* is to occur. This is the relief of (the parents') singularity into (the child's) universality. Since truth is always the death of what it is the truth of, the child constitutes the *Aufhebung* or relief of the parents. The parents (re-)produce their own death. This should not be understood in terms of empirical genealogy, birth and death as the continuity of the family line. Derrida emphasises how, beyond the empirical death of the parents, the child will constitute their 'actual', spiritual death: "One will have to comprehend, conceive how the family *really, actually dissolves itself* in the education of children and the passage to bourgeois society" (G, 99a). There must be a distinction between death pure and simple, and the highly determined use of this term in Hegel's (restricted) economy. Janus-faced, the child holds together at-once the life and death of the family. On the one hand, he forms the death of the parents; on the other side of the relation but part of the same proposition, he opens out onto the world of politics and law which will at the same time be the preservation of the ideality of the family (and thus of the parents). The child, as the relief, as the *Aufhebung* of the parents, maintains itself in a contradiction, *is* this contradiction of dissolution and preservation.

The absolute ethical totality is defined as the 'people-spirit,' absolute *Sittlichkeit*. Now, being the first moment of *Sittlichkeit*, the family precedes the people, and at-once prepares the path for this next development; it is the not-yet of absolute *Sittlichkeit*. According to the structure of repetition and replacement, in coming before the people and so in giving way to it, the family will also at-once preserve and maintain itself as an ideality in the people. The people will be the truth of the family. The family finds the possibility of its 'existence' *as such* only in the breach and only as a

kind of after-effect. It is affected by what it makes possible and what comes after it. And what forms and fills the breach is the child.

The family, through marriage, possession, and education, annihilates or relieves itself, "sacrifices" itself, Hegel says. And consequently, in the course of a struggle for recognition, the family loses and reflects itself in another consciousness: the people. The family exists in the people only relieved, destroyed, preserved, debased, degraded, raised (G, 108a).

The parents invest themselves in what will both destroy the family and, through that very destruction, also preserve it, the child, *at-once* a part of themselves *and* totally other. This investment takes place through consciousness. So that,

[i]n order to think this death, one must make the middle of consciousness intervene and must think childhood as consciousness. The natural child, as living animal, does not bear the death of its genitors. So the death of the parents *forms* the child's consciousness (G, 132a).

The feeling in the family, love as the *Aufhebung* of the law and of desire, will (have) form(ed) the thesis for the next moment. The human family comes at the end of the philosophy of nature and the beginning of the philosophy of spirit; that is, it comes at the point when spirit emerges out of nature, when spirit takes itself back after its fall into exteriority, and becomes an object for itself in consciousness. So the *feeling* in the family must also pass beyond the natural feeling of love, beyond the natural relations between singularities, into the universality of the child. This movement is absolutely necessary to the (future) constitution of absolute *Sittlichkeit* (as ethical universality). Crucially, at the same time this relief is also absolutely necessary to the preservation of the family since it constitutes the ideality of the family. So that, in accordance with what Derrida describes as the restricted economy of the Hegelian system, this loss constitutes a preservation.

Hegelian Death

Death being a relief, the parents, far from losing or disseminating themselves without return, 'contemplate in the child's becoming their own relief.' They guard in that becoming their own disappearance, reg(u)ard their child as their own death. And in reg(u)arding that disappearance, that death, they retard it, appropriate it; they maintain in the monumental presence of their seed – in the name – the living sign that they are dead, not that *they are dead*, but that *dead they are*, which is another thing. [...] As long as the parent's are present to their death in the child's formation, as long as one keeps the sign or seme of what is no longer, [death is denied.] When one says "death is," one says "death is denied"; death is not insofar as one *posits* it. Such is the Hegelian *thesis*: philosophy, death's positing, its pose (G, 133a).

The consciousness of the parents is the matter out of which the child's consciousness is formed.

What prevents the child's departure from becoming a loss without return (for the parents) is the fact that the other, opposed consciousness (the child's) into which the parents' lose theirs, is their own proper consciousness, the truth of their consciousness (G, 118a). The opposition of the two consciousnesses (parents and child) is what permits the specular, the imaginal, the speculative, circulation of the investment.

The unity of the specular and the speculative is remarked in the possibility for the parents to regard, to contemplate their own proper disappearance relieved in the mirror of the child, of the child in formation, as becoming-conscious (G, 134a).

The child issues from the family but belongs to the political, and the "political opposes itself to the familial while accomplishing it" (G, 133a). The state opposes the family because family love is still too natural. In the state, this constriction, this bind to the natural and empiric, is relieved through an absolute counter-constriction, characterised by the death penalty. According to Derrida, the doctrine of the death penalty assures the passage from the critique of formalism to the position of absolute *Sittlichkeit*. The death penalty is the condition of true freedom. It reflects the universal law, and since it is neither coercive nor repressive, it is "the absolute manifestation of freedom" (G, 99a). The criminal, alongside all other citizens, recognises the penalty and so is free, knows that putting natural life into play is the condition of free subjectivity.

This death is not the finite death of the empirical individual but an essential death, welded to the first one: The putting at stake of life is a moment in the constitution of meaning, in the presentation of essence and truth. It is an obligatory stage in the history of self-consciousness and phenomenality, that is to say, in the presentation of meaning.⁹

This is the movement of constriction and counter-constriction. The negative absolute of this counter-constriction, of pure freedom, takes death as its *phenomenal* form; by its ability to die the subject proves itself to be free. "Death is the phenomenon (the shining appearance, the lustre, the glory, the gleaming brilliance [*eclat*], the *Erscheinung*) of the subject that frees itself in subjecting itself to the law's universality" (G, 100a). The temptation to ascribe to the constriction and counter-constriction relation one of equivalence or of exchange however must be resisted. What resolves itself into absolute *Sittlichkeit* has first of all to be relieved. This relief suspends all determinateness, positive or negative. The infinite law that prescribes the death of the inferior term also prescribes the equivalence of +A and of -A. Beyond empirical arithmetic, this prescription annuls its two determinations. "Death alone permits access to this infinite that permits calculating the incalculable" (G, 100a). Derrida thus begins to elaborate Hegel's economy: this is not an economy of exchange in which the crime is simply annulled by the punishment. Whilst this reciprocity is the condition of every penalty, in the death penalty, the equivalence becomes infinite:

[T]he equivalence between the debt and the chastisement is infinite, no determinable resemblance, no determinable commensurability, no determinable analogy lets itself be grasped between their two ledgers, their two ranges. No relation gives itself to be understood in, lays itself open to finite concepts and understanding's determinations. The equivalence is infinite and null (G, 101a).

The infinite equivalence cannot produce itself in the relation between empiric finite singularities or groups; rather, it concerns the entire community as *the* ethical totality. This totality is *the people*, and this people attains absolute freedom only by putting its life at stake, only by risking

⁹ Jacques Derrida, 'From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism without Reserve' in *Writing and Difference* (WD), 254.

its empirical neck. This happens in times of war, when fear and the instinct to survive are put to one side in favour of spirit, freedom, and the ethical. The community is bound always to repeat the act of its coming-into-being, of its recognition of itself.

Whereas the people desire war, the family is drawn toward survival. This leads, inevitably, to war between the law of the city and the law of the family (G, 146a). The law of the family, the law of singularity, is one of preservation. It protects itself from itself, from its own desire to self-destruct through the cannibalistic destruction of the other's singularity which would, in turn, destroy its own. It must maintain the other in order to maintain recognition; any "blow to the other is the fatal contradiction of a suicide" (G, 139a). This is why the family is always caught in feeling, why it resists ethical objectivity. But as soon as it demands and gains the recognition it requires and desires, the family is raised up into the city and into universality. It fights against, and submits to, the law of the city, of politics and absolute *Sittlichkeit*.

Indifference, that is, absolute contradiction, the infinite flow of one into the other, is gone out of only in relieving singularity in(to) the universal that determines, marks the opposition, the hierarchy and so on. Once relieved, the singular totality becomes universal totality, absolute spirit. It still exists as singular totality – "family," "possession," "enjoyment" – but relates to itself only in an ideal mode and "proves itself as self-sacrifice." By this sacrifice, it sees itself, gets itself recognised in another consciousness, the people's. It is "saved" at the same time as lost as singularity (G, 141a).

In contrast to the private domestic law of the family, government manifests the law of the people-spirit. The government holds together the scattered members of the community. But the community itself, the present and real existence of the community, remains the family. And while the government authorises and organises the rights of the family (to possession, to enjoyment, and so forth), it is also threatened by this family which risks getting too comfortable, too much at-home in the individual group and thus not in the "whole." So the government must also be the enemy of what it governs, allow it and at-once disallow it (G, 146a). Without this

interaction, the family could just become “engulfed in the natural being-there” (G, 147a). This “form of subsisting” otherwise known as (abstract, nonproductive) death, is warded off by spirit as it manifests itself in the government’s upsetting of the established order through its assertion of the need for war. In this, the government must strike a balance: not too much, if there were only war, the community’s natural being there would be annihilated; not too little, just enough to satisfy the need for ongoing recognition (G, 147a). The child, as the division between, and unification of, the family and the state, thus acts as the *Aufhebung*, maintains war, the contradiction of contradiction and noncontradiction.

Ultimately however, and as in all the formal moments on this path to absolute knowledge, *within* the *at-once* of this dissolution and resolution, dissolution will always remain the stronger power. What goes on to form the thesis of the next moment is superior to the totality of the former moment. While the death of the parents in the child is not a complete loss on their investment, neither is it a complete return. The relationship between the parents and the child “implies a mediation: what was only an image and anticipatory representation (*Vorstellung*) of spirit in conjugal (natural and immediate) desire becomes actuality of spirit. That is progress, an advance” (G, 147a). The child’s consciousness does not offer an absolute return, does not give back to the parents the consciousness they entrusted to it. The actuality of the child is foreign, it is its-own-in-itself, proper to itself. Without this risk of loss (of consciousness) on the part of the parents, no relation to, or desire for, the other could posit itself. The child’s love for the parents is affected by the same division; it knows that it only attains being-for-self in separating from its source of emission. This is the price the family pays for expanding mediacy, for the right to preserve and dissolve itself in the political.

From that moment on, death, suicide, loss, through the passage to the people-spirit as absolute spirit, amortize themselves with every time, with every blow, with every *coup*, in the political: at the end of the operation, the absolute spirit records a profit in any case, death included (G, 141a).

1.4 The Economy of Salvation

As the death of the family shows, in Hegel's restricted economy each loss is always a save. Death acts as a condition of possibility for the functioning of the system, for without it there would be only stasis as opposed to the ongoing and necessary process of recognition. Death is in essence productive, producing out of its negativity the positivity of the next moment. Moreover, it has a kind of provisional or temporal element. The loss of particular, finite totalities actually happens, but since they are preserved in the idealisations that issue out of their demise, and since they are made to function as a kind of resource or fund which provides the capital for the next moment, their loss is swept up and carried along, reinvested in the system. They are maintained in death. If spirit absolutely lost itself in what constrains it, absolutely dispersed into its other, whether that be matter, the body, or the family, it would be an abstract negativity, a pure non-productive negativity. But by dispersing in order to *feel* its re-unification, the spirit goes through the movement of the *Aufhebung* with the certainty of a profit on this investment, insured by the fact that any departure from itself is never truly a departure. Present death is always an investment in the future; it implies "speculative dialectic's whole chain of essential concepts (relief, posit(ion)ing as passage to the opposite, ideality as the product of negativity, and so on." (G, 137a). Hence the pattern of repetition and replacement: politics and religion are the truth of the family, philosophy will be the truth of politics and religion. Each moment is made possible by that which precedes it and that which replaces it.

Within the restricted economy then, there is no absolute loss; each provisional loss constitutes a progression in spirit's self-knowledge. Each of the formal moments or idealities produced out of this movement acts as a determinate representative of spirit (G, 15a), allowing spirit to know itself in its freedom. This movement operates according to the opposition of inside/outside which Derrida describes as the matrix of all opposition (D, 103). By taking the phenomenal form, spirit emerges from itself and opposes itself in order to know itself as object-for-itself. The process of

presentation, which is crucial, depends upon the opposition of inside/outside. This opposition is thus maintained, and also at-once overcome, for the outside (the phenomenal or the sensible) belongs to the inside according to the processes of internal and external necessity. It is precisely this mode of belonging which allows for the relief of opposition: spirit, as essence, will always have the resources to relieve its opposite, since the sensible, the phenomenon, *issues out of* and *belongs to* spirit as its negativity. The movement of mediation is thus the division into, and the overcoming of, oppositional thought, whilst relying on that oppositional thought to provide the dynamic behind the relation.

Knowledge is thus explicitly linked by Hegel to manifestation, presentation, representation. This structure is exemplified by the family. Judaism is determined by Hegel as being inferior to Christianity because the Jews cannot see the truth, cannot see the infinite in the finite. In contrast, the Christian family is superior because it relieves this division into love, the unity of one in the other. This conforms to the very structure of speculative dialectics, which is itself oriented towards each part finding its place, and its relief, in the totality. As Derrida shows in both *Glas* and 'Outwork' each part of the system is necessary to the production of the whole to which it essentially belongs. The concept of totality legitimates (the existence of) the parts, and the parts allow for the anticipation of the whole. Spirit *is*, in effect, both sides of the opposition, the whole *and* the parts. So by belonging to the process by which this knowledge is achieved, the representations and manifestations of spirit seem to belong to the truth itself. Process and result are absolutely linked, all finite moments belong to spirit as a part of the whole, even if only its negative products of this process of self-knowledge. In Hegel's dialectic truth is inseparable from the process of its becoming, form is inseparable from content. It is in this way Hegel that manages to control any dehiscence between the transcendental and the empirical, between the analytic and synthetic aspects of speculative philosophy. By claiming that the concept is self-presenting, completing itself as it manifests itself, Hegel does away with any "discrepancy between

production and exposition” (D, 30-1). Rather, philosophy is “a *presentation* of the concept by itself, in its own words, in its own voice, in its logos. No more anteriority or belatedness of form, no more exteriority of content” (D, 31). As such, the exterior, the manifestation or representation, seem to belong properly to the space of philosophy; as a part of the process of truth, even if functioning negatively, they belong to the truth itself.

The Place of Representation

However, this schema that Hegel employs to legitimate the existence and form of his philosophy, also causes a few difficulties. For the work of spirit is to free itself from negativities in order to move on. The sensible, space and time, in their oppositional roles, function as accessories to truth which can be discarded once each finite synthesis has been realised. The phenomenal, as negativity, is thus an external necessity of spirit, but one that is brought about by the internal necessity of spirit thinking itself. After it has fulfilled this function, it becomes a kind of formal refuse that by rights, whilst belonging to the *process* of truth, no longer belongs to the *truth itself*.

Such is the “concept of the philosophy of nature”: the setting free of the concept that wants to reassemble itself close by itself after having organised the suicide of nature, that is, of its *double*, of its “*mirror*,” of its “*reflection*.” The reflection captured the concept but also dispersed itself in its image, in a kind of polymorphism that had to be reduced. The Proteus has strictly to be subjugated. Nature will have asked for nothing else: “The purpose of nature is to kill itself and to break through its shell of the immediate, of the sensible, to consume itself like a phoenix, in order to upsurge, rejuvenated, from this exteriority, as spirit.”

The rhapsodic multiplicity of these figures accuses and accentuates precisely nature. The concept’s spiritual unity must do violence to these figures in order to free itself from them. This operation, “this action of spirit is philosophy” (G, 117a).

Derrida here identifies what I think he considers to be one of the defining traits of speculative dialectics, and a broad definition of metaphysics: the passage through, and then the discarding of, the phenomenal. Philosophy sets itself up in/as opposition to the phenomenal. While spirit needs the sensible in order to know itself, at the same time there is a sense of distrust for this ‘outside,’ that it while it represents it also masks, while it reveals it also conceals and deceives. This is a

fickle friendship; as soon as the outside has served its purpose, it must be dispensed with, literally dispatched, at the first opportunity. So these 'figures' or outsides seem to have a peculiar status: they belong to the process of truth, but given that the action of philosophy is to "do violence to figures" this value is temporal; once the outside has served its purpose it no longer belongs to the truth itself. Spirit is the essence behind the image, what brings the image to life. This is why human life is more spiritual than animal life, Christian more than Jewish: what counts is the way spirit mediates itself in each moment. The phenomenon or manifestation is worth only as much as the spirit is worth, at that moment in time. It is worth less (although not quite worthless) once the spirit has moved on to the next synthesis. The ideality is always caught in time, existing as a monument or embodiment of a past truth. It allows for the maintenance of history. But at the same time, it is a waste or by-product of this process of mediation.

But what is the place and value of the representation once spirit has moved on? The manifestations of spirit are a part of spirit, *and at-once*, something external, non-essential to spirit, the products of dissolution. This is the strange lodging of the ideality then; it does *and* does not belong to truth, is maintained *and* discarded. Very precisely, it is caught in the contradiction of contradiction and noncontradiction, in the *Aufhebung*. According to the circularity of speculative logic, this contradiction is always already resolved. But what happens to each ideality once it has been passed over, in other words, once it has become an ideality, a record of a past truth in which the truth itself (spirit) *is* no longer present?

Ideality in general, in Hegelian terms, is "the *negation* of the real, but a negation where the real is put past, virtually retained, although it does not *exist*" ('The Pit and the Pyramid,' M, 90).

It is this virtuality that seems to interest Derrida. What does it mean when something is virtually retained? To help answer this, certain parallels can be drawn between the ideality and the preface. In both function and positioning they seem to share certain structural features.

‘Outwork’ brings to the fore the ways in which the preface both does and does not belong to the Book of Philosophy. Despite its dismissal as a mere formalism, produced out of empirical history, it *belongs* to the extent that empirical history is relieved into the transcendental history of spirit as the movement through which spirit comes to know itself. But it *does not belong* to the extent that it is not part of the truth itself and is “the excrement of philosophical essentiality” (D, 11). So the preface *does* and *does not* belong to the Book; it cannot simply be done away with, but rather must be thought through, negated and internalised. Once domesticated into the Book, it has no value of its own and is no longer productive. Does each formal moment, each ideality, thus have the status of a preface? In the family’s effacement and preservation of itself through its relief into the next moment, and ultimately in absolute knowledge, is there not the same structure at work as in the relation of a preface to the supposed ‘main body’ of the text?

The question of the family, and then of religion, is pos(it)ed thus in the preamble; the family is at home only in time – in which reason has not absolutely reappropriated itself, has not found itself (close) by itself in its absolute familiarity, in which it does not yet dwell. Crossing the vestibule – family, religion – is the passage from the pro-position to the philosophical position that is its truth. Philosophical truth says: I am always following [*suis*] family and religion (G, 96a).

What constitutes the value of the preface or the formal moment is, very precisely, time. The dehiscence between the time of spirit, as a kind of non-time in which there is no distinction between anticipation and recapitulation, and that of the ideality or preface, as rooted in empirical time, will be reduced in absolute knowledge. “When the double necessity, both internal and external, *will have been* fulfilled, the preface, which will in a sense have introduced it as one makes an introduction to the (true) beginning (of the truth), will no doubt have been raised to the status of philosophy, will have been internalized and sublated into it. It will also, simultaneously, have *fallen away* of its own accord” (D, 13). Absolute knowledge operates as a circle of absolute re-appropriation, governed by the logic which dictates that the origin of oppositional thought is the telos of philosophy: Truth. According to the logic of internal necessity, absolute knowledge is

nothing other than the pre-face or pre-dicate to the preface. The telos of philosophy, absolute knowledge or Truth, is the true preface to the preface, the presupposition which governs and orients all subsequent productions: “the concept (the being-abreast-of-itself of absolute Logos) is the true *pre-face*, the essential *pre-dicate* of all writings ” (D, 15). The rest functions merely as an endless postface, the historical exposition of the truth, its rooting in space and time. The fulfilled concept, the end of the self-acting (self-moving) method of the philosophical text, was the pre-dicate, the preface, to the preface. The structure preface-text is open at both ends,¹⁰ each preface has always been prefaced and will always act as a preface to the next moment, so that “any *program* is already a *program*” (D, 20). The movement of spirit’s unfurling is an infinite series of prefaces. The passage of the *Aufhebung* as the movement of idealisation and interiorization means that each ideality, each of its products, goes toward constituting the identity of spirit, that is, the result. As Derrida remarks, this return to spirit is nothing other than a returning home. So in principle, all of spirit’s productions belong to the *already* of spirit, to the *deja*.

[T]he beginning – before it the *deja*, the already – befalls, as always, by the instance of the result. The rebound of the *already* should not leave any remain(s). In speculative dialectics, the result is not a remain(s), the remain(s) does not result. At least as remain(s). If it could result, it would relieve its remnance [*restance*]. A doubtlessly inevitable consequence of an *already* conceived as origin, beginning, ground in the sense of presentation (G, 11-12ai).

The equivalence between the *result* and the *already* means that the system needs no external legitimation, nothing exists outside of it providing methodological rules or precepts. Moreover, each result is (a part of) *the* result. Such an equivalence *ought* to guarantee the totality (from inside). In *principle*, nothing should escape this logic: *nothing* should *remain*.

¹⁰ See ‘Outwork’ pages 14, 20, and 27.

The Necessity of Presentation

In principle, the status of what is 'virtually retained' can be thus understood. But is it really this simple? By reading *Glas* and 'Outwork' together, it is possible to see the urgency Derrida gives to this point: Philosophy *is* its presentation of itself; speaking its own truth, it comes into being only at the moment it presents itself. The taking place, the act of presentation itself, is essential. Truth and meaning are made possible only through the act of spirit positing itself, when spirit puts the outside to work in the detachment of a representative, and yet opposing, other. This is confirmed for Derrida in Hegel's contrast between this productive negativity and abstract negativity which "never takes place, [...] never *presents* itself, because in doing so it would start to work again. [It] literally never *appears*, because it exceeds phenomenality in general, the absolute possibility of meaning" (WD, 256). It can be seen, for example, how this contrast, and its equation of sight and knowledge, plays itself out in Hegel's devaluation of the Jewish faith: seeing the truth is inseparable from the process of truth (coming to) itself, sight links itself inextricably to knowledge. One passes from seeing the outside of truth, to seeing/knowing that truth itself. Spirit loses itself or disperses itself into the presentation, the image or spectacle, and then proceeds to interiorise that presentation, consume it or lift it along into the next moment. Hegel makes negativity function as a resource, the *Aufhebung* permits the negative to be converted into positivity, into a condition of possibility: the negative "*collaborate[s]* with the continuous linking-up of meaning, concept, time and truth in discourse" (WD, 259-60).

This relation of inside to outside allows Derrida to make a further qualification in his description of the dialectic: "The Hegelian *Aufhebung* is produced entirely from within discourse, from within the system or work of signification. A determination is negated and conserved in another determination which reveals the truth of the former. From infinite indetermination one proceeds to infinite determination, and this transition, produced by the anxiety of the infinite, continuously links meaning up to itself" (WD, 275). In this dependency of each part of the system upon those

that surround it, which is nothing other than a need for context (although it will become apparent that context cannot be in absolute *control*), in this *provisional* dependency of truth and meaning on their 'outside,' Derrida sees in Hegel's concept of dialectics something like a system of signification. This is a problematic I want to reserve for the next chapter. But it is produced by the difficulty I have examined in this first chapter: the outside *does* and *does not* belong. The outside, as finite, allows for a passage towards the infinite. But it also hinders such a passage, covers or masks the infinite. For while the outside is a condition of possibility for the functioning of the system, Hegel allows this only on condition that the outside is, in truth, a product of the inside and belongs to that inside. The outside is thus a special sort of outside. And in order to really understand it, it must be grasped how inside and outside fit together, how their relation of belonging is determined by Hegel. This is nothing other than understanding the whole dialectic, the infinite unity of spirit and the relation of opposites.

As this chapter has shown, the logic of internal and external necessity, the *Aufhebung*, say how these relations *ought to work*. But somehow this explanation just isn't enough. And Hegel agrees: if it were possible to *understand* the unity of inside and outside then he would not need to articulate family relations, family love. This poses a problem for Hegel, providing the site for Derrida to intervene in Hegel's discourse and begin his deconstruction of it. Love is unity, the unity of the subjective and objective. Now this unity needs to become accessible to the entire community, so that the community can become just that, a true, spiritually unified, community. Love must be raised up and objectified. Crucially, as the next chapter will show, Hegel associates the communal with the communicable. In order for love to be appreciated by all, it must be communicated and shared by all. That this unity *must be known* is determined by the role of man in the completion of spirit and the attainment of absolute knowledge. The chain of the dialectic which ensures the integrity of Hegel's system, which grants everything a place and puts everything to work, also places certain constraints upon it. And here is the problem: love, as

unity, is opposed to what Hegel sees as the finite and formal categories that constitute language. To put love into language is to carry out a very Jewish act of separating the infinite from the finite. It must be articulated, but language would restrict, would miss, the very essence of the thing. Hegel thus has to find a way of allowing love to articulate itself, and at the same time, to remain beyond the finite categories of articulation. He must set a structure in place which will allow this without damaging the very unity in question.

So while it is plausible to say that the dialectic is organised by internal and external necessity, the *Aufhebung*, and so forth, this does not lead to a true understanding of true unity. As Derrida notes, one cannot simply ask '*what is the Aufhebung?*' for the answer is that the '*Aufhebung* is an *Aufhebung*' (G, 34a). In order to get beyond this circularity, to truly understand this relation, the community needs to understand love. Love marks a point of transition in the system; it stands between the felt unity of singularities, individuals, and the felt unity of the community as a whole, between understanding and reason (G, 18a). It reveals how the part belongs to the whole, the unity of subjectivity and objectivity. But since love is beyond the understanding, it must be expressed otherwise. This is where the family comes into play, and Derrida's suggestion that the family is more than a local moment begins to bear weight. For if the family is the preface to philosophy, it is also the case that, just like the preface, which introduces man to the Book, the family introduces man to philosophy, to unity. To elaborate Derrida's question: If identities, formal moments, idealities, are unthinkable without that which precedes and that which replaces them, is philosophy, the absolute unity between subjectivity and objectivity, unthinkable without the family? What then, is the role of the family within the dialectic? Can it still be considered to be a mere example or must it in some way *remain* (it is after all, Derrida says, that which organises remains, burial, mourning) or stand in some position outside the system in order to express love, to announce what love is? Is it in some way a representation that can articulate the role and function of representation, the law of belonging and of the ideality as that which is

‘virtually retained’? As Derrida asks, “what is the function of the Christian model” and “in what sense is it exemplary for speculative onto-theology?” (G, 33a). These questions will form the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Two: Hegel and Metaphor

2.1 The Function(s) of the Family

[A]nother account of the family must be taken, on another ledger, another charter. This determinate moment of the family, this finiteness *figures* (for now I leave a very large opening for this word) the system's totality. A certain familial schema, a certain family (last supper) scene *suits* the system's infinite totality. The system's infinite totality thinks, produces, and reflects itself in that scene.

Will one rashly say that the finite family furnishes a metaphoric model or a convenient figuration for the language of philosophical exposition? A pedagogical ease? A good way to speak of abstract things to the student while playing with the familiarity of family significations? Even then what the absolute familiarity of a signification is must be known. If that can be thought and named without the family. Then one needs to ascertain that the finite family in question is not infinite already, in which case what the alleged metaphor would come to figure would be already in the metaphor (G, 21a).

In Chapter One I began to look at Derrida's reading of the relations at work in the Hegelian family. Within the system of absolute knowledge, the family functions as a formal moment, an ideality *produced out of*, and *belonging to*, spirit. This constitutes its 'local' function. But Derrida also raises the possibility of an-other, much more complex function and it is this possibility that is of interest here. This other function is not easy to pin down. *Glas* pulls at snags in the weave of Hegel's dialectic, at points which seem important both to the composition, and to the disruption, of the dialectic. *Glas* is a difficult text to handle, composed not of a homogenous argument, neither for nor against Hegel. It cannot be read *in one go* with one proposition coming to state the truth of the former. Rather, different points converge and separate, some seeming to contradict, or at least to displace, others. This does not mean to say that *Glas* is chaos and confusion. Rather, it draws out the complexity, something like the woven texture, of Hegel's writing. *Glas* teaches about rupture and continuity *in* rupture and continuity, the nature of such an attempt suggesting Derrida's desire to resist the desire of the philosopher to master and impose order. Nonetheless, the aim here is to tie some of the threads of *Glas* together. I will do so by working closely around the above quotation which, to a degree, *figures* Derrida's reading of the Hegelian family.

The area of interest remains that of the relation between the inside and the outside, or between the infinite and the finite.¹ In Chapter One I investigated Hegel's concepts of freedom and recognition, in other words, how the infinite thinks itself *through* the finite. Here, I want to expand on the problematic of how the finite (man) thinks the infinite *through* the finite. For as I have already established, it is not enough that spirit come to know itself in its freedom. Man and spirit are one, spirit's self-knowledge is indissociable from man's knowledge of spirit, and thereby, from man's self-knowledge. The speculative dialectic is this procession of knowledge, its sights set on the telos of absolute unity in absolute knowledge or what Derrida nicknames *Sa* (*Savoir absolu*). Now, I have already suggested that family relations, love as the unity of objectivity and subjectivity, are an important stage in this progression, but that they also pose a difficulty for Hegel. Love must pass from the family into the wider sphere of society and state, it must become communal and communicable. This is equivalent to saying that family relations must be articulated. Hegel must find a way to state the unity of the family relation and procreation as progress and development. This poses some formidable difficulties, for as Derrida says early on in *Glas*, Hegel does not separate the "problem of philosophical language" from the question of the family (G, 7a).

First difficulty: the relation in question, the *Aufhebung*, is an infinite relation. It *appears* to play with finite terms, the family members. The difficulty lies in *expressing* an infinite relation, the relations of the infinite, using these finite terms such that the relation will be accessible to human understanding. One problem for Hegel is how to articulate what is,

¹ These terms, for example, 'inside' and 'infinity,' have a structural equivalence. They occupy the same position within the tripartite structure of the dialectic. Both are spirit, in contrast to the 'finite' or 'outside,' which occupy the position of being (the) outside of spirit. While the terms may change, the structure remains the same.

essentially, beyond the finite limits required for articulation. He will need to rely on the finite terms to do so.

Second difficulty: Hegel often uses terms from the family when trying to explain or exemplify relations in the system *in general*. The family thus articulates or makes explicit relations in general, the *as such* of relations. “This determinate moment of the family, this finiteness *figures* (for now I leave a very large opening for this word) the system’s totality” (G, 21a). What does Derrida mean when he suggests that the family *figures* the system’s totality, that the infinite totality *thinks* and *reflects* itself in the family scene? As I have already said, each part of the system reflects spirit, and thus the totality. But Derrida seems to be suggesting more than this, that the role of the family expands from that of a formal moment into something like a metaphor that can represent the relations within the totality. The family thus seems to act as a *metaphor* for relations in general, a particular example that can articulate a general structure.

Third difficulty: “The system’s infinite totality thinks, produces, and reflects itself in that scene” (G, 21a). Derrida’s use of the term *produces* suggests that the family is not simply an example or metaphor for relations, but that these relations are actually *produced* in the family moment and that the family in some way *institutes* relations. It seems then that the family is only able to act as a metaphor because of the very relations that the family puts in place.

Fourth difficulty: the family does not simply signify relations: it *is* a relation, and it is *in* a relation to the system as a whole. So it seems that it also articulates relations through its syntax, its position within the system. Thus a chain is formed: the family says about relations, about belonging to a unity, through its *content*: through love, filiation, paternity, and death. In so doing, it attests to the form of belonging which in turn enables the family to

belong to spirit. It seems that it is only able to disclose relations because it is *in* this relation, because it acts like an 'outside,' a determinate representative that *belongs* to the inside. But it is an 'outside' according to the very structure of relations the family exemplifies/puts in place. It articulates *and* demonstrates the relation, which allows it to articulate and demonstrate the relation, and so on. It announces *belonging* in its capacity to belong, representation in its capacity to represent, the relation of the finite to the infinite in its relation to the infinite. But in doing so much, can this capacity still be called metaphorical?

In what follows I will respond to these problematics. It will become apparent however, that it is impossible to separate them or to think one without the other. Indeed, this will be the very difficulty in question. *Glas* mirrors this difficulty; as I have already said, Derrida's thoughts on this role of the family do not form a concise, linear argument. Rather, Derrida picks out certain points, certain areas of continuity or confusion in Hegel's writings. The task here is to piece together Derrida's readings of these points in order to draw out what he thinks the other function(s) of Hegel's family might be, thereby pushing one level deeper in understanding Derrida's reading of Hegel.

The Metaphor of Life

Derrida says that "the Hegelian system commands that it be read as a book of life" (G, 83a). Hegel often uses terms from the family, but more often the term 'life,' to describe the unity of speculative dialectics. Both terms appear familiar, and there seems to be a certain naturalness in their usage. Yet it can be assumed that the concept is not alive in the same way as an animal is alive, that this is not life in its biological sense. What the term 'life' does convey however, through the general metaphor of organicity and the cycle of life and death, is the unity of the encyclopedic circle.

Life, the essential philosophical determination both of the concept and of the spirit, is necessarily described according to the general traits of vegetal or biological life, which is the particular object of the philosophy of nature. This analogy or this metaphoricity, which poses formidable problems, is only possible following the organicity of encyclopaedic logic. From this perspective one can read all the analyses of the “return-to-self” of the seed, of the “internal chance,” of “lack” and “generation,” and in general the syllogism of life, the life of the spirit as truth and death (termination) of the natural life that bears within itself, in its finitude, “the original disease...and the inborn germ of death ” (D, 48).

The *Aufhebung*, the unifying work of spirit, must be thought of as a kind of organic relation that is not applied to opposition from the outside but is inherent in the fundamental unity from which opposition springs. It is inter-relatedness, that which binds together the sameness and difference of producer and produced, spirit and its oppositions. For Hegel then, the passage of speculative dialectics cannot simply be “reduced to a lifeless schema” but rather concerns itself with the “inner life and self-movement” of the concept (Hegel, 1977, section 51). This “living essence” of the concept contrasts with applied formalisms and empiricisms, “static classification” and “simple oppositions, formulas prescribed once and for all” (D, 23). As Hegel puts it “The Spirit is certainly a trinity, but it cannot be added up or counted. Counting is bad procedure ” (Hegel quoted in D, 24).

While the metaphor of life initially appears quite natural, the contrast Hegel draws with counting suggests otherwise. For what Hegel finds in, or puts into, the term ‘life’ is that which exceeds the quantitative growth covered by ‘counting.’ ‘Life’ *expresses* qualitative enlargement. Now, I have already touched on Hegel’s distinction between the quantitative and the qualitative. The ‘life’ of the spirit is not the same as animal life, it is not quantitative “natural life” or “biological existence” (WD, 255).² Nor is it Jewish life, since Hegel does not value Jewish relations. Indeed ‘life,’ here entrusted with the duty of conveying spirit, is

² “This life is not natural life, the biological existence put at stake in lordship, but an essential life that is welded to the first one, holding it back, making it work for the constitution of self-consciousness, truth and meaning ” (WD, 255).

not a general term, but is issued from the specific determinations which give value to one form of life over another. While the term 'life' might appear to be familiar it is actually a highly circumscribed signifier: the "essential life" (WD, 255) of the Christian family. If it were not, Hegel would neither choose, nor be able, to call upon it to act as a metaphor for true spiritual unity.

At this point, I merely want to note a complication: the value of 'life' is granted according to the very movement of the *Aufhebung* that the metaphor is supposed to convey. If one of the specific forms or examples of 'life' that Hegel uses as a metaphor for the movement of the *Aufhebung* is that of the family, it is also the case that this 'term' is a product of the process of the *Aufhebung* which the metaphor is supposed to designate. A first reading can be taken from Derrida's statement: "what the alleged metaphor would come to figure would be already in the metaphor." The *content* of the metaphor, the signification of the word 'life,' is actually family life. This content is a product of the movement of the *Aufhebung*. At the same time, the metaphor is *acting on behalf* of this *Aufhebung*. It is produced by the very thing it is to *express*. The metaphor is to signify what has produced it.

It can be seen then, how Derrida is drawing out the complexity of what appears at first to be a simple use of a simple metaphor. Understanding what the metaphor *means* to convey requires understanding the relations at work in the family; but these relations are beyond simple understanding and articulation. Hegel cannot simply state the meaning of love or the *Aufhebung*. The family cannot be understood without grasping this relation. Yet this relation cannot be understood outside an understanding of the family; this is apparent in the fact that Hegel needs to employ metaphor in the first place. So that already there is a sense of a kind of 'to and fro' aspect to this use of metaphor, a certain circularity and dependency of each part on another. What the metaphor is supposed to figure is already in the metaphor.

Nothing stands alone to point the way, each point looks to another to explain itself. Metaphor is dependent upon the relation of parts to the whole and is a part in relation to the whole. At the same time, it is called upon to exemplify and explain the relation of the part to the whole. In order to untangle these relations Hegel's concept of metaphor needs to be clarified.

The Sign

For Derrida, there are notable parallels between the movement of the *Aufhebung* and the movements of signification and metaphorisation. He sees Hegel's sign as a relation between two presences in which one presence refers to another. The detour through signification becomes "history *comprehended*: between an original presence and its circular reappropriation in a final presence" ('The Pit and the Pyramid: Introduction to Hegel's Semiology,' M, 71). This circular reappropriation repeats a now familiar structure, that of a departure from self better to regain that self. History here is the story of that departure and return, a charting which comprehends, re-gathers and unifies in an operation enabled by the very logic which says that all histories belong to *the* History of spirit.

So while the detour through the sign repeats and is superior to the detour of spirit through matter, the logic that drives this movement remains consistent for all structures. While the philosophy of nature precedes the theory of the sign, the sign will itself be relieved into spirit's self-presence and absolute self-knowledge. For the sign is finite, and like all finite determinations of spirit, is not the truth itself: "the finite *is not*, i.e., is not the truth, but merely a transition and an emergence" (Hegel quoted in M, 74). Signification is thus another detour for spirit on the path to truth, the sign acting as the passage via exteriority to interiority. Which means that *within* the sign, another detour also takes place. The signified/signifier opposition maintains and is maintained by the very same opposition. "The

content and truth of meaning escape” the signifier, “it remains inferior, anterior and exterior to them. Taken by itself, the sign is maintained only *in sight* of truth ” (M, 80). The signifier is an external necessity that, belonging to the work of the negative, is the exterior of truth. Once again, it belongs neither quite inside nor quite outside the concept *as such*.

And once again, this is because of time. The sign announces the absence, the non-presence, of the truth. The concept of the sign dictates that its function lay in bridging the gap created by time; it refers (supposedly) in the present to another (non-present, deferred) presence. The truth of this deferred presence is the destination of the sign. This process thus refers to, and at-once defers to, a presence. In referring/deferring the sign nonetheless marks or notes the division, the distance from this presence. This gap between the truth and the sign opens the need for representation. For Hegel, intuition itself is already united to a representation, the signified represents the presence of the ‘*real*’ signified, it is the ideational united with the real in the concept (M, 76-79). Consequently, the signifier is not only representative of the signified; it is the exterior body of what itself has a representative function.

But insofar as it is united to *Vorstellung* (to a representation), this presence becomes representation, a representation (in the sense of representing) of a representation (in the general sense of conceptual ideality). Put in the place of something other, it becomes *etwas anderes vorstellend*: here *Vorstellen* and *represent* release and reassemble all their meanings at once (M, 81).

The signifier is a representation of a representation, the body that is animated by the life of the spirit. Its soul is the signification of the signified. The signifier will be done away with according to the relief of exteriority. Derrida compares this exteriority to a tomb, which *as* tomb, *says* both life and death.

The tomb is the life of the body as the sign of death, the body as the other of the soul, the other of the animate psyche, of the living breath. But the tomb also shelters, maintains in reserve, capitalizes on life by marking that life continues elsewhere. The family crypt: *oikesis*. It consecrates the disappearance of life by attesting to the

perseverance of life. Thus, the tomb also shelters life from death. It *warns* the soul of possible death, warns (of) death of the soul, turns away (from) death. This double warning function belongs to the funerary monument. The body of the sign thus becomes the monument in which the soul will be enclosed, preserved, maintained, kept in maintenance, present, signified. At the heart of this monument the soul keeps itself alive, but it needs the monument only to the extent that it is exposed – to death – in its living relation to its own body. It was indeed necessary for death to be at work – the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* describes the work of death – for a monument to come to retain and protect the life of the soul by signifying it (M, 82-3).

As in all monumental productions of spirit, the sign as monument has a double function: the very life of the body attests to its (necessary) death as body. The body, as the sign of inevitable death, harbours death. But this tomb also shelters, as though in a crypt,³ the life of the spirit; it attests to the continuation of life in the face of sensible death. The opposition of body and soul accords ‘life,’ true life, to the soul. Like a protective layer, the body is the buffer which endures the exposure to death. In turn, the monument or tomb maintains the soul by signifying the death of the body, of what *is not* spirit. This act of signification is (as I have said before with regard to negativity versus non-productive, abstract death) the act that makes meaning. The presentation/representation of the soul by the body and by the death of the body in the monument is what allows for the relation between the intelligible and sensible to be exposed. But this distinction is necessary in order to make negativity work in the service of meaning, that is, to make it present (in both senses). Spirit is immortal, but the body must die.

So time is the time of the sign, the referral of one presence to another. In the face of true presence, the sign will dissipate itself of its own accord, its necessity vanishing in the reconciliation of true presence with itself. It exists as a product of the *Aufhebung*, raised,

³ See ‘Fors: The English Words of Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok’ in *The Wolf Man’s Magic Word – A Cryptonymy*, trans. Barbara Johnson (1986, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis) for more on Derrida’s reading of the concept of prosthesis.

relieved, interiorised. The intelligence produces the sign by negating the sensory spatiality of intuition (M, 77-79). The sign relieves the space of sensible immediacy, time relieves space. Time is the relief, the truth, “the essence as Being-past (*Gewesenheit*) – of space. Time is the true, essential, past space, space as it will have been thought, that is, *releve*. *What space will have meant is time*” (M, 89). The content of sensory intuition must erase itself, efface itself before the meaning, the signified ideality, whilst nonetheless conserving itself as the exterior of this process. This movement repeats the structural movement of the preface and of the function of the family. The exterior remains but does not remain, relieved by the signified ideality which will, in its turn, be relieved. In sum, a series of relief(s).

The thing (the referent) is relieved in the sign: raised, elevated, spiritualized, magnified, embalmed, interiorized, idealized, named since the name accomplishes the sign. In the sign, the (exterior) signifier is relieved by signification, by the (ideal) signified sense, *Bedeutung*, the concept. The concept relieves the sign that relieves the thing. The signified relieves the signifier that relieves the referent (G, 8a).

Metaphor

Metaphor works through the same process of relief. As Derrida remarks, Hegel’s “propositions are structural, they state the legality of a typical figure” (G, 165a). The movement of metaphor repeats the structure of the sign, which itself has repeated the structure of spirit’s departure into the exteriority of matter. All these departures are governed by the same reconciliatory gesture. Now, for Hegel true meaning, the truth itself (*Sa*), is an atemporal and nonspatial signified, an eternal self-identical presence. The provisional absence of this absolute presence calls for the detour through the sign.⁴ The need for

⁴ It is interesting to note the difficulty of referring to the non-spatial, the non- or a-temporal, other than through negative modifications of sensory expressions. These expressions thus work through the relief of the sensory in order to point towards what exceeds the sensory, and they are thus metaphors. However, as Derrida says, “the relation between metaphorization [...] and negative concepts remains to be examined. For in dissolving any finite determination, negative concepts break the tie that binds them to the meaning of any particular being, that is, to the totality of what is. Thereby they suspend their apparent metaphoricity” (M, 212).

metaphor seems to arise when this detour through the sign fails, that is, when language itself must undergo a detour through another exteriority, the exteriority of metaphor, in order to tell the truth (of) itself. So in metaphor, the detour is redoubled; not only must the 'idea' be accessed through the sign, but the signified of that sign itself signifies some other idea which can only be accessed by metaphor.

Not only then is there a distinction between the signified and its presentation, but *within* the signified there is a distinction between its literal and its metaphorical meanings. The extra function of the signifier covers the ground created by a missing signifier, the absence of the 'right' word. So, metaphor is designed to name that which it does not name *literally*. This means that the use or function of metaphor is dependent upon a distinction between the literal and the metaphorical, upon a concept of metaphor that is made possible by, or contained within, metaphor. For if, following the classical conception of language, the proper job of language is to name properly, to name the thing-itself, *literally*, then language used properly works on the basis of a secure, even if not analogical, bond between the signifier and signified, the name and the thing named. Nothing *ought* to escape this bond, ideally the signifier ought to be able to capture the signified in its representations. In the context of philosophy⁵ metaphor announces a failure in language, the need for metaphor arising when the thing resists being grasped and pinned down by a name. This makes language work harder, approaching tentatively as though trying to sneak up on what it seeks to name. This inability to grasp the thing-itself, to enclose it in the security or propriety of a noun, calls for metaphor and it also ensures that metaphor must always be plural. For if there were only one metaphor, it would cease to be metaphor and become the proper name.

⁵ The use of metaphor may be one of the ways in which the distinction between philosophy and, for example, poetry, is legitimated. This distinction corresponds to a division between the 'voluntary' or desired use of metaphor in poetry, and its provisional, undesirable but necessary, usage in philosophy.

Returning to the metaphor 'life' then, it can be seen then that Hegel is calling upon all that takes place in family life, all that this 'life' signifies, except actual, biological existence, all except life itself. The metaphor incorporates or carries along all those elements or properties of life that can provide a metaphor for that which itself is not *actually* alive. The noun 'life' has an essential signification, signifying the biological essence of life, what 'life' means. This essence can be distinguished, although it is inseparable, from the proper or properties which it contains as part of its essence. This distinction, Derrida says, "permits the play of metaphor" (M, 249). The metaphor signifies the properties but not the essence, so that the distinction between the proper noun (or the literal) and the metaphor is maintained (M, 249). Moreover, for metaphor to function properly, these properties must be finite: the polysemia associated with the noun, the different significations that it carries along with it and contains as part of its set, must be limited, distinct and identifiable. Hegel relies upon this very semantic depth when he names the 'inner life' of the concept. Grasping what the 'life of the concept' means at once depends upon a (pre-) supposed clarity of understanding with regard to the proper meaning of the noun 'life' whilst at the same time demanding an understanding which works through the exclusion of that very propriety.⁶ That is, without ever directly, fully, or properly stating the essence itself, the metaphor signifies the attributed properties of the thing: in this context, 'life' must name everything except, literally, life. One must distinguish then, between "the essential content of sense and the formal appearance through which it is intended" (G, 75a).

In 'White Mythology' Derrida identifies this movement of metaphorisation as an *Aufhebung*. In gathering its properties, in naming them under the heading of the noun, metaphor works through the movement of idealisation, the very movement of the *Aufhebung*. For what is the

⁶ The criteria that determines the value of metaphor is thus produced by the same chain that determines the need for metaphor.

Aufhebung if not a kind of sweeping up of the various properties, the identities and nonidentities which go to make up or compose a (single or simple, unified) identity? Is it not, moreover, that which functions according to the telos of reaching a point when this movement is no longer necessary, when spirit meets up with itself in its absolute self-identity, or in other words, when thing and word match, when there is no longer a need for metaphor, and in principle, no need for the sign at all?⁷

Above all, the movement of metaphorization (origin and then erasure of the metaphor, transition from the proper sensory meaning to the proper spiritual meaning by means of the detour of figures) is nothing other than a movement of idealization. Which is included under the master category of dialectical idealism, to wit, the *releve* (*Aufhebung*), that is, memory (*Erinnerung*) that produces signs, interiorizes them in elevating, suppressing, and conserving the sensory exterior (M, 226).

What is decisive is the distinction or opposition between the sensory and sense; the sensory is called upon to name that which (already and essentially) is conceived as being nonsensory, sense itself. The nonsensory is what demands the supplementary assistance of the metaphor. Once again, the inside (the nonsensory) needs the outside (the sensory). The framework which situates Hegel's use and concept of metaphor is constructed out of the oppositions of nature/spirit, nature/history, nature/freedom, "which are linked by genealogy to the opposition of *physis* to its others, and by the same token to the oppositions sensual/spiritual, sensible/intelligible, sensory/sense (*sinnlich/Sinn*). Nowhere is this system as explicit as it is in Hegel. It describes the space of the possibility of metaphysics, and the concept of metaphor thus defined belongs to it" (M, 226). As a result, "all the regional discourses, to the extent that they are not purely formal, procure for the philosophical discourse metaphorical contents of the sensory type" (M, 227). The concept of metaphor, as that which makes manifest an idea that remains latent or hidden, is based upon the opposition between presence

⁷ The telos of language is its own demise, a point when the thing itself would be grasped by direct intuition without the detour of the sign.

and (re-)presentation, original and repetition, spirit and matter. To know the truth one must *see* it; sight is thus equated with knowledge and knowledge with the necessity of the detour. This implicitly provides the justification for Hegel's use of metaphor; by rights, the *Aufhebung* should require no additional explanation, it should name what it names, the signified should be accessible via the signifier. But once again, spirit must make a detour through the sensible. The metaphor of 'life' is charged with conveying a sensory expression of the nonsensory, what is 'beyond' the sensory.

The Familiarity of the Family

The quotation cited at the beginning of this chapter can now be read as a series of possibilities which Derrida simultaneously confirms and refutes, or at the very least problematises. The first possibility is that the family "*figures*" or acts as a metaphor for the relations within the totality. I have shown how Hegel employs it to that end, using 'life,' which *must* mean 'family life,' as a metaphor for infinite relations. These relations require metaphor precisely because they are infinite, need a sensory expression because they are nonsensory. The family metaphor imitates the way in which spirit knows itself through a detour via the outside. The family metaphor is thus an 'outside' that allows man to know the inside, allows the finite to know the infinite. So yes, the family does *figure* the system's totality, is a finite representation of the infinite.

But as Derrida suggests, it may be rash to see in the family a *simple* metaphoricity. Hegel has difficulty in articulating the family relation, in making it accessible to finite understanding. For while the family is finite, relations in the family are infinite. As infinite, these relations themselves need something like metaphor to be expressed. So the finite terms of the family are representatives of spirit, sensory expressions of the nonsensory. In this way, the family is already metaphorical. This will be explored in more detail in the next section,

the point now is to get a sense of what is at stake in Hegel's need and attempt to articulate the family. It means that Hegel is relying on terms that are already in some way metaphorical (the family) to act as a metaphor ('life' as a metaphor for the system in general). The unifying 'love' that makes the family *family*, is already a metaphor dependent on finite terms which are themselves metaphorical. This metaphor then becomes a metaphor for relations in general, for the unifying work of the *Aufhebung* which requires metaphor because, as infinite, it is essentially beyond expression. Moving further down the quotation then, Derrida says that in order for the family to provide a metaphor for the system "what the absolute familiarity of a signification is must be known. If that can be thought and named without the family" (G, 21a). The reader of Hegel must be absolutely familiar with the signification 'family.' Initially this seemed simple enough, but it has become clear that the family relation cannot simply be understood or defined. The relations in the family are already metaphorical and they cannot be understood outside of metaphor. Yet despite this, Hegel still calls upon the family to name, explain and define that which cannot be named, understood or defined, the *Aufhebung*. That which acts as a metaphor thus requires, in a way which will be explored further in a moment, a kind of metaphoricity itself. To use terms from life and the family to explain how the *Aufhebung* works then, to explain the unity of the system and the relation of inside and outside, the finite and the infinite, actually offers no help in understanding this *Aufhebung*. These terms simply lead back in circular fashion to a need to understand the *Aufhebung*. Which points to the end of the quotation cited: "what the alleged metaphor would come to figure would be already in the metaphor" (G, 21a). The *content* of the metaphor is itself already metaphorical.

And there is another complication. Derrida says that the reader of Hegel must be familiar with familiarity, with "what the absolute familiarity of a signification is" (G, 21a). What does it mean to be absolutely familiar with a signification? What is this familiarity and what

does the term 'signification' signify? To be familiar with a signification is to understand a signification, is to know what it means. Meaning is identity, clarity, definition. And for Hegel, meaning and signification are both products of the *Aufhebung*. This was shown in Chapter One, in the contrast between productive negativity (that belongs to the movement of the *Aufhebung* and *produces* meaning) and abstract negativity. And it has been shown in this chapter, in Derrida's reading of metaphoricity as an *Aufhebung*, an idealisation that gathers together properties in order to determine essence. Both productive negativity and metaphorisation are products of the *Aufhebung*, both the end result of the movement of opposition and its culmination in synthesis. Can this movement be thought without the family? Can it be thought outside of the relations between inside and outside that the family gives us to understand? No, which is precisely why Hegel needs to employ metaphor to *express* or *represent* the *Aufhebung*. Metaphor itself cannot be thought without the family just as the movement of the *Aufhebung* cannot be thought outside the family, outside that which acts as a *metaphor* for that relation. And so familiarity, meaning, identity, cannot be thought without the family. Which also means that, if metaphor is a product of the *Aufhebung*, and the family is a metaphor for the *Aufhebung*, then the family metaphor is a metaphor for metaphoricity.

*"Plus de métaphore"*⁸

By drawing out Derrida's complex layering of these difficulties, it can be seen how each point that appears to offer meaning and stability requires supplementation. Neither the family, nor metaphor, nor the *Aufhebung*, can be understood without the other. In order for the family to act as a metaphor, one must be familiar with the family. To be familiar with the

⁸ This heading repeats a subtitle from Derrida's 'White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy' in *Margins of Philosophy*. In a footnote to accompany it, the translator Alan Bass notes "The title of this section, 'Plus de métaphore,' is untranslatable as it means both 'more metaphor' and 'no more metaphor' " (M, 219).

family, one must know what a family is. To know what a family is, is to state its meaning, to define, to clarify, in other words, it is to identify. Identification is a product of the *Aufhebung*, as is the family. Neither can be thought without thinking the *Aufhebung*, but the *Aufhebung* itself cannot be thought without the family, without that which acts as its 'outside.' This is especially true of the family since it marks a moment of transition between thought unity and *felt* unity, true unity. It is this very possibility of thinking something through its outside, this *felt* unity of the inside and the outside, for which the family is to act as metaphor. But the family cannot be named or thought outside of the circulation of family metaphors, its unity is the very thing that cannot be stated and requires metaphor. This kind of circularity, which is dizzying at times, cannot be arrested. The *Aufhebung*, metaphor, clarity, definition, meaning, cannot be understood without, or outside of, the family. And the family cannot be understood outside of metaphor, the *Aufhebung*, and so forth. Through Derrida's reading it becomes clear that "a *snag* [is opened] in writing that can no longer be mended, a spot where neither meaning, however plural, nor *any form of presence* can pin/pen down the trace" (D, 26). There is no point of presence nor certainty that can halt this *snag*, and while the infinite totality may *think* and *reflect* itself in the family scene, this scene seems something like a hall of mirrors in which the reflection is merely bounced back again.

Derrida is extremely interested in this kind of circularity. In 'White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy' he phrases the difficulty in another way: "What is defined, therefore, is implied in the defining of the definition" (M, 230). This statement which, to my mind provides one of the most illuminating suggestions as to the focus of Derrida's work in these 'early'⁹ texts, brings out the necessity of re-contextualisation and supplementation. For the

⁹ By 'early' I am not intending to mark a strict chronological, Rortian division in Derrida's work. However, in the texts published in and before 1972 Derrida does lay down some of his most influential terms, terms in which this reciprocity between defined and defining can be articulated.

definition of the family is implied in the definition of definition, in the way in which the meaning of the family is determined. Process not only determines the result; it *is* the result, the need for identity to process itself again through another determination. There no longer appears to be a simple relation of cause and effect, the ability to state what comes first, identity or metaphor, the *Aufhebung* or the family. Each part of the relation is *needed*. The result is not independent but remains tied to a need to be supplemented by what has produced it. Derrida thus challenges the concept of metaphor as simply an auxiliary to be tagged on to aid understanding. Rather, the system thinks itself in metaphors. As Derrida remarks: “Metaphor is less in the philosophical text (and in the rhetorical text coordinated with it) than the philosophical text is *within* metaphor” (M, 258, my emphasis).

In showing spirit or *what is* to be in a relation of contamination and dependency with its products, Derrida opens the possibility that the ‘outside’ may have a constitutional role. Does metaphor, and specifically the metaphor of the family, act not merely to exemplify relations, but also to institute them, a “metaphoric *model* [...] for the language of philosophical exposition”? (G, 21a, my emphasis). What are the relations in the family such that they can have such metaphoric potency? In order to answer this, family relations must be investigated once again, this time in the context of the Last Supper scene. It is still a matter of exploring the relation between the inside and the outside, the life of spirit as that which binds inside and outside together. The specific form of this ‘binding’ finds itself articulated as ‘the father *is* the son’ and in the possibility that “there is more than simple rhetorical convenience in giving to spirit the name father” (G, 28).

2.2 The Last Supper

When Hegel says that Jesus opposes to the Jewish figure of God the relation of a father to his children, what discourse is in question? A discourse of Jesus certainly, and one that Hegel assumes or reproduces. But what form of discourse? Symbol, figure, metaphor, comparison? An analogy of an infinite relation (implying God) with a finite relation (father/children)? But the 'infinite' relation also implies finite terms, creatures. So the very possibility of the question is uncertain. In order to make its presuppositions appear, one must first take account of what Hegel himself says about comparison in the Last Supper scene (G, 64a).

I have established that any attempt to ask 'what is the *Aufhebung*' leads only to a circulation of metaphors, of family relations, each pointing to another to explain itself. The *Aufhebung* is charged with explaining this circularity. But the *Aufhebung* "is not some determinate thing" that exists outside of the terms it is relating (G, 121a) and it thus has no position from which to offer such an explanation. The metaphor of the family does little to aid this situation; it too defers back to what has produced it, to the unthinkable unity of the *Aufhebung*. The family as a metaphor then, might point in the right direction, might help to give a general sense of relations at work, but it offers no final solution to the difficulty. Not, that is, as a metaphor.

But what if the family's role is not metaphoric? Or rather, what if *before* this metaphoricity, and as a condition of possibility for it, the family functions yet one level deeper? Something needs to stand outside the circularity of the encyclopedic circle, to be detached, in order to point the way. This moment is the Last Supper and it is a family scene. Any attempt to grasp the *Aufhebung* outside this context of Christianity, outside that which functions as the 'conceptual matrix' of Hegelian logic and that which causes the family *proper* to come into being, comes up against the limitations of the understanding. The Last Supper scene, the moment when family relations are demonstrated, offers a way out of this impasse. Very precisely, it relieves the limitations of the understanding by demonstrating the relief of

understanding. And since truth only happens with manifestation, this is also the moment when such relations truly come into being. So the Last Supper is an inaugural moment that offers up relations before the institutionalisation of relations.

The Last Supper Scene: The Origin of Exemplarity

Since each moment of truth is made possible by that which precedes it, the Last Supper as the truth of family relations is made possible first through its contrast with the non-relations of the Jewish faith. This comparison, itself made possible by the very structure that the Christian family puts in place, allows Christianity to set itself over and against Judaism. It does so within the hearth of the family precisely because the family provides the site in which feeling overcomes the split between morality and right, subjectivity and objectivity, the finite oppositions maintained by Judaism: Jewish understanding is replaced by Christian feeling. The family opens (onto) the logic and reason of the infinite that can posit itself only by passing into the finite, *and* “the reason of the finite that posits itself only by passing into the infinite” (G, 30a). It determines and legitimates itself as a development and a progression from Judaism according to the very laws, the very relation, which it institutes. For what constitutes the superiority of the Christian over the Jew is, precisely, exemplarity, the act of giving-over-to-sight that reveals the infinite in the finite: “in Christianity [...] God is revealed as Spirit” (Hegel, quoted in G, 30a). The Last Supper scene reveals the structure of revelation that will, importantly, determine the identity of philosophy. For in turn “Philosophical truth says: I am always following [*suis*] family and religion” (G, 96a). That philosophy will be the truth of Christianity, but it is in Christianity that this process of representation, repetition and replacement is announced.

As I noted in section 1.3, the advent of the family *proper* occurs only through the institution of *Sittlichkeit*, the relief of abstract right and abstract morality through love. In the preceding

determinations of the (non-) family, this division has not been overcome, there is no love. In introducing love into the equation, Christianity replaces the law and opens the possibility of true freedom. Hegel's determination that the Jews lack feeling and do not love is born of another determination; that the Jews do not feel familiar with God, but are merely subordinated and commanded by an absent God. "This relation persists even in the manner in which the Jews live then their liberation, the moment Moses comes to offer it to them" (G, 47a). Moses speaks neither the language of the intellect, nor that of sensibility (G, 48a). He persuades the Jewish people of his plans for liberation through neither intelligence nor sensibility; he works on neither their minds nor their hearts. He uses the power of the imagination, but due to what Hegel determines as a 'Jewish' inability to see the unity of infinite reason and the finite orders of the understanding, imagination and sensibility, the appeal to the imagination remains abstract, disordered, artificial, inadequate.

When Moses proposes to the Jews to set themselves free, his rhetoric is forcefully cold and artificial. [...] A stranger to symbol, to the concrete and felt union between the infinite and finite, the Jew has access only to an abstract and empty rhetoric. [...] The split between the infinite and the finite blinds him, deprives him of all power to represent to himself the infinite concretely (G, 48a).

In other words, the "intermediate schema of an incarnation is wanting" (G, 48a). The Jews lack what Derrida names "the comparative structure" (G, 70a), the ability to see the unity of objectivity and subjectivity. They are incapable of letting themselves be affected by the unity of the intelligible and the sensible, by the "mediatizing, agglutinating function of feeling" (G, 48a). The sensible may dazzle them, but it is mere "free play without form," "an infinite play but without art, pure spirit and pure matter." (G, 49a). For Hegel, the limitation of the Jewish faith comes with the inability to see one thing in another, seeing instead spirit *or* matter, spirit *and* matter, as though these constituted two separate entities that they only then try to unite. The Jewish forms of representation have the structure of a tabernacle. The tabernacle is a texture of 'bands.' In essence however, it remains a signifier without a

signified. “Certainly sensible to the absence of all sensible form, the Jews have tried to produce an object that gave in some way rise, place, and figure to the infinite. But this place and this figure have a singular structure: the structure encloses its void within itself, shelters only its own proper interiorized des ert, opens onto nothing, [...] a hole, an empty spacing, a death ” (G, 49a). The tabernacle lacks meaning or content. If space for Hegel is a sign of death, *is* death, then the absence of presence, the pure spacing at the centre of the tabernacle cuts right to the core of the Jewish faith: at the heart of it, there is nothing. The form has no content, is an empty formalism. This failure of the Jewish faith is not a contingent event; it is written into the faith from the start (G, 54a). The limitations of Judaism are inscribed in its “rhetorical impotence,” “the figural weakness of a people incapable of appropriating and raising the letter ” (G, 54a) .

What Judaism lacks, Christianity has in abundance. Christianity opens the ontological, the possibility of seeing one thing in another and the question, “precisely, ‘what *is* the *Aufhebung*?’” Indeed Derrida says, for Hegel no ontology is possible before, or outside of, the gospel (G, 57a). Moreover, the ontological, the possibility of the *is*, cannot be “unglued and decapitated” from the problematic of the family (G, 56a). Being is the unity of subjectivity and objectivity. This unity can only be *felt* through the *living* relation which the family not only exemplifies (or rather which it can never *simply* exemplify) but which, as the example of the example or the exemplary ideal, it also institutes.

The Infinite Family as the Exemplary Example

The true family emerges only with Christianity because within the latter love takes the place of abstract right and abstract morality. Love does away with the economy of exchange *as such*, with the dead formality of the (Jewish) law. It offers in its place a relief of negativity through recognition, a relief which, through loving the other and in turn loving the self as

object-for-self, allows for self-knowledge. But it also demands the preservation of the self in order to maintain this process of recognition. The family thus guards (the other) in order to regard (the self). It also regards in order to guard, equates presentation with preservation. This is why the child provides the truth of the family when it offers a representation, reflection or mirror of the parents. But since it is also for-itself, it departs from the family, provides the objectification of feeling by relieving it into society and the state, resulting in the dissolution of the family moment.

For Hegel then, the *most true* relation in the family is thus between parents and child. Derrida says this can be qualified further: the true relation is the father/son relation, and the “true father/son relation awaited Christianity” (G, 34a). The privilege of the father/son relation finds its legitimation in the relation between God and Jesus Christ, the *most true* father and son. For this father/son relation is *more* than simply an example among others. The reason? The name of God, the infinite spirit of God, “can no longer be an example, since it is not finite. At least it can no longer play the role of an example, if the example is a particular case in a whole or a homogenous series. It can be an example if the example is the exemplary ideal, the absolute sense of which the finite examples are precisely only approximating samples” (G, 29a). God is not an example but an exemplary ideal. He is therefore the most ideal father, the *as such* of fatherhood. As *the* father/son relation, the Christian father/son relation provides the model, the normative concept, to which all the finite father/son relations are imitative, weakened repetitions, finite examples. These finite examples can be substituted for one another according to the law that says the finite, as the outside, representation or example, can represent the inside, and that while these finite terms can shift, the relation remains the same, outsides representing an inside. This is the freedom of play among examples. “This freedom is finite. Play here is made possible by finitude, but

finitude relieves itself” (G, 30a).¹⁰ The finite family is thus an example of, and thereby determined according to, the infinite family; its relation to this infinite family is that of an example to which the latter functions as the law. The finite family thus relieves itself into the infinite family, just as the example returns to that which it exemplifies.

As such, the infinite family, and the infinite father, are exemplary ideals. But there is more. Since the relation *itself* between infinite father and son, the relation of love, is infinite, it too cannot be an example. It is the *as such*, the relation-ness of the relation. This relation of the infinite father to his son is *the* relation and it thus sets the structure of exemplarity as the relation between a father and his son. What Christianity provides for Hegel therefore is “the example of a *naturally speculative* religion” (G, 32a). Since the infinite family relation sets the structure of exemplarity it therefore cannot be an example of that structure. The infinite family, the infinite father, the relation between this infinite father and his son, infinite love, all are exemplary ideals.

Now, this has a dramatic effect on the place of the example, here the finite family. Thus far it has appeared to be an example of the relations enjoyed by the infinite family. But what Derrida says about substitution problematises the apparently simple relation of examples to the law. For what is it that enables these finite families to substitute each other and to act as examples or representations of the infinite family? According to the structure of exemplarity, the finite family acts as the outside, a metaphor or representation, for the inside, the true unity of the infinite family. But this structure of exemplarity also says that since the example repeats the law, since the relations in the finite family repeat the relations of the infinite family, these two families can no longer be rigorously distinguished. The finite family is

¹⁰ This play of substitutions precisely constitutes Hegel’s concept of metaphor.

bound together by love, and since God teaches mankind how to love, man can love only infinitely. To love infinitely is necessarily to love God as infinite (G, 35-36a, and 64a). Since the finite family imitates the love in the infinite family, since this family thus loves infinitely, Derrida says that the “family according to (Christian) love is infinite. This family is already what could be called the speculative family ” (G, 36a).

No longer can one rigorously distinguish between a finite and an infinite family. The human family is not *something other* than the divine family. Man’s father-to-son relation is not *something other* than God’s father-to-son relation. Since these two relations are not distinguishable, above all not opposed, one cannot pretend to see in one the figure or metaphor of the other. One would not know how to compare one to the other, how to feign knowing what can be one term of the comparison before the other. One cannot know, outside Christianity, what *is* the relation of a father to his son [...]. One cannot even know [...] what is the *is* in general outside Christianity. Such is the Hegelian thesis on the spirit of Christianity, that is, on rhetoric (G, 65a).

While the infinite father/son relation sets the exemplary ideal, the finite father/son relation offers an exemplary example. And since in both cases the relation remains the same, that of the infinite love that relieves the finite into the infinite, the finite family is not something *other* than the finite family. The *relation* remains the same, infinite love, and it is precisely infinite love that demonstrates how the finite *is produced by and belongs to* the infinite. The infinite father/son relation determines the structure of exemplarity which says that the finite family shares the same relation as the infinite family. While it is an *example* of the infinite family, in partaking of the *same* relation it *is* also the *same* as the infinite family. It is the same but is not the same, is the same but is not identical. The finite family *is* and *is not* the infinite family.

One was content to analyze a representation. As long as one thinks one knows what a family is, a human family, one does not analyze the process, the trial, of alienation or projection of the human family within the celestial family, the contradiction that constitutes and produces this process (G, 206a).

This is an extremely complex structure. The infinite family declares that the finite family is the same and different to it. And it can do so because of the relations articulated in the Last Supper scene, relations which declare, as I shall show in a moment, that the finite son (Christ) *is* his infinite father, that the finite *is* the infinite, the same and different. And since truth only happens with manifestation, not only is the truth of the infinite family reflected in its relations with the finite family, but moreover this truth only becomes itself in the moment of articulation. That is, through articulating the infinite bond of the finite to infinite the family *institutes* that relation, a relation of manifestation and representation. The infinite family institutes the bond which says that the finite family *is the same and different* to the infinite family. And it institutes this relation by representing it through the finite family. It thus determines the place, the value, and the temporality, of the example or representation as that which is the *same and different* to the law. In this way it becomes its own condition of possibility; the infinite family declares itself to be the exemplary ideal by representing itself through the relations of the finite family, by giving examples of its infinite relation. In other words, it is only by articulating itself as a family relation, by using the finite metaphor of the family, that it institutes the relation which allows it to articulate itself through the finite metaphor of the family. It says that the finite family is a metaphor or sensory expression of the infinite relations of the infinite family, and that at the same time, this metaphor is not something other than the relation in question since here too the relation is infinite. It still *is* that relation. This is what allows Derrida to say that “the Christian family elaborated by the young Hegel [is] the conceptual matrix of the whole systemic scene to come” (G, 55a).¹¹ No longer can the (Christian) family be subordinated to the regions of a rhetoric, simply an

¹¹ “To know for example whether the ‘later’ texts can be treated as the descendent and akin consequence, filiation, product, the son of the youthful elaborations that would be the system’s paternal seed; [...] this question is posed in advance, reflected in advance in the analysis of Christianity. It is the question itself of Christianity staged as the Last Supper scene” (G, 56a).

example of the structure at work. It *is* the very way in which spirit thinks itself and the very relation that is in question here.

I have already elaborated on the ways in which Derrida shows that the family cannot be considered as merely a formal moment. This finds its confirmation and articulation in the relation between the finite and the infinite families and between the finite son and his infinite father. These relations are exemplified and instituted in the Last Supper scene. In this scene, the possibility of metaphor, of representation, the oppositions and unity of intelligible/sensible, spirit/nature, inside/outside, infinite/finite, find themselves thought through and, crucially, articulated and presented. This scene describes the whole as thought in parts, the possibility and impossibility of comparison as the way of thinking the infinite, the felt unity of the system as the infinite love which disassembles itself in order to think itself: “Whence Hegel’s exemplary rhetoric, the exemplarist proceeding of his rhetoric: of his rhetoric as the technique of figures and as the form of argumentation” (G, 29a). All the relations I have touched upon so far find their possibility in this moment. The Last Supper scene is the moment when the living relation of father to son is given over to the understanding and thereby demonstrates the unity of the copula. The energy of this operation, of this copulation and this unity between father and son is the essence of this scene.

The Father is the Son

If Christianity exceeds the relations of comparison and exchange found in Judaism, what then is the relation between the Christian father and son? God *is* what *is*; he is infinite spirit. Since spirit is at-home in God, God remains abstract, veiled, hidden. In order to go through the process of recognition, the mediation of opposition constitutive of identity, he must pass out of himself, oppose himself and make himself an object-for-self. The difficulty is that, as

absolute, spirit can have no opposite. In section 1.2 I noted how this leads spirit to oppose itself to matter. The same structure is at work here. As infinite spirit God can have no opposite. So he must oppose himself to himself, must divide himself in two. He fathers a son (G, 30-31a). Without this division, the Christian God would remain as abstract as the Jewish God.

The Christian God manifests the concrete spirit that remained veiled and abstract in Judaism; but he manifests this only by becoming a father. [...] A father without a son is not a father. He manifests himself as concrete spirit – and not just anticipated, represented, *vorgestellt* – only by dividing himself in his seed that is *his* other, or rather, that is himself as the object for himself, the other for him and that then returns to him, in which he returns to himself: his son {*filis*} (G, 31a).

On the one hand, Christ's value lays in *what he represents*. Being a finite son is one thing; being the finite representation of the infinite spirit of God, God's own manifestation to himself, is quite another.

[C]annot God – of himself – fall into the finite, incarnate himself, become his own proper example, play with himself as the infinite becoming finite (death) in order to reappropriate his infinity, to repeat the spirit, that is, to have a son-man who is his own proper seed, his own proper product, his own proper result, his best yield? (G, 30a).

God manifests himself through his proper product, through his son. Absolute creator, absolute father to absolutely *everything*, God remains abstract until he becomes a *father* proper. So on the other hand, it must be understood what it is to have a son. For God manifests himself in many ways, some might argue in every way. And all of these manifestations still are spirit, for example, matter still *is* spirit. So the value of Christ lies not only in *what* he represents, but also in *how* he represents it. Like all other finite products of spirit, the value of the representation, of “the analogy or proportion depends on what the finite *is* as the passage to the infinite” (G, 29a). As *a son* representing *his father*, Christ is superior to all other manifestations. So while Christ's value lays in his essence, which like

all essence *is* spirit/God, there is a structure in place which commands that this *form* of representation is superior to other forms. In order for this to be the case, the *analogy* or representation must take its value from both sides of the opposition. Christ's value lays both in his representation of the infinite *and* by virtue of his doing this in a very particular way, as a son (product) representing the father (producer).

What is distinctive about the father/son relation is that it seems to make *explicit* the *relation* of producer to produced. It is easy to believe that one knows *what is* the relation of a father to his son and that if this relation acts as a metaphor one can *understand* through it the relation of spirit to its products, the movement of the *Aufhebung*. Indeed, Hegel's philosophy *is* the elucidation of this relation, the division of unity into division and unity. Until now, this relation has been named the *Aufhebung*. The father/son relation declares that the *Aufhebung* is filiation, relation-ness itself. The son is the concrete manifestation of the father who divides himself, lets a bit of himself leave, only in order to have it return to himself, to know himself more truly. Christ is the (splitting) image of his father. He is the product of God's self-division, the finite product of the passage from infinite to finite that returns to the infinite again (through finite death to infinite resurrection).

The Christian family provides the normative concept of familiarity, the normative concept of the relations between a father and a son. This normative family concept dictates that the son *is* an example of the father, that Christ is the revelation, the manifestation of God. He *is* the finite product that offers a finite example of his infinite father. And since the relation of infinite love, 'the father *is* the son,' is the same in the finite family, it declares that all sons are examples of their fathers *and* examples of the infinite father. For the relation itself is always spirit. This is where things get a little tricky, for this relation, this spirit, is this relation or unity that resists articulation. The departure-and-return-to-self (of spirit) takes

place within the third element of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit: “this medium obtains the element of *familiarity*: God’s familiarity with his very own seed, the element of God’s play with himself” (G, 31a). Spirit *is* familiarity, the production of and division into a son and the reappropriation of that product. Spirit thus names not only a part *in* the relation, but relation-ness itself. Paternal love is production and reclamation, the claim made by the father that the son *belongs* to him, that the son *is* (a part of) the father. And since what opposes itself to spirit will be relieved, as the element of filiation “spirit is the element of the *Aufhebung* in which the seed returns to the father” (G, 31a). Crucially, paternity *is* the relation: fatherhood is love, love is filiation, filiation is both the parts and the whole. Thus ‘the father *is* the son.’

Love is the *Aufhebung*, the binding, of the family. Love is thus mediation, filiation, the *Aufhebung*, the way a father relates to his son through *presenting* himself through his son and *being present* in his son. What must be understood is how the son is both different from the father, a representation, *and* at-once still *is* the father. What is representing still *is* what is being represented. The father *is* the son, the son *is* the father. The part *is* the whole. That is what Hegel learns from, or puts into, Christianity. The product, the result of God’s self division, still *is* God, in other words, Christ is the “absolute rebound of the result” (G, 29a). *And* yet other than God, since Christ forms a totality, has a certain independence and autonomy. The part *is/and* the whole, both separation *and* filiation. (This recalls the earlier distinction between the finite and infinite family, and its overcoming. The finite family still *is* the infinite family, just as the son *is* the father.)

Ontology and the Relief of Understanding

The Last Supper is the *mise en scene*, the staging, of the *essence* of the *is* in the form ‘the father *is* the son.’ In offering *the* example of exemplarity, the Last Supper announces the spirit of Christianity as the *revelation* of revelation, “the revelation of the essentiality of this

essence that permits in general copulating in the *is*, saying *is*,” (G, 56a) of the type S *is* P. It displays or demonstrates the *as such* of the *is*, the unity of the *Aufhebung*. So that until being ‘traverses’ Christianity, it is the not-yet of what it is already. Man cannot *conceive* being outside the relations established in the Last Supper, precisely because man can never *conceive* Being. And since Being must be thought in order for it to come-to-itself, the relations opened by the family are decisive.

Why can’t man conceive Being? Precisely because of conception and conceptuality. For while the concept of unity must be accessible to man, there is a flaw in human understanding. Returning to a passage I cited earlier (section 1.2) in which Derrida says that “oppositions are posited as such by the understanding that ‘copies’ reason” (G, 95a) it can be seen that the understanding imitates the structure of reason. The understanding *ought* to imitate the unifying power of reason. But, Hegel says, this capability can become ‘weak’ or can even ‘disappear’ (G, 95a). The understanding remains trapped in imitating the divisions between subject and object, it cannot *comprehend* their unity, their one-ness. It divides into subject and object, predicate and tense. Time, the division of what *is* into the not-yet of the already and into the various predicates and tenses which compose man’s understanding of the encyclopedic circle, interrupts a true *feeling* or sense of unity. But it is also a necessary stage in the overcoming of man’s weakness and his passage into a felt sensation of true unity.

It is thus only the understanding that requires the *is* to be grasped in this way, only the categories of the understanding that are divisive. For while it is true that spirit must divide itself in order to appear to itself *as such*, Derrida suggests that “Being perhaps lets itself be re-covered or dissembled, bound or determined by subjectivity (Heidegger), but that is, for

Hegel, in order to *think itself*. First in Christ” (G, 57a, my emphasis).¹² Thinking imposes the categories which drive the *Aufhebung* and which it then goes about relieving, but they remain, for mankind, categories nonetheless. The difficulty then, is in *thinking* transcategorically, thinking the unity of the *is*. To ask ‘what *is* the *Aufhebung*?’ or ‘what *is* the relation that binds, what are filiation and mediation?’ is to be already engaged in ontology.

Since the ontological question [...] unfolds itself here only according to the process and structure of the *Aufhebung*, one can no longer ask: what is this or that? or, what is the determination of such and such a particular concept? Being is *Aufhebung* [...] the ‘active’ productive essence of being. So the *Aufhebung* cannot form the *object* of any determined question (G, 34a).

In other words, “[t]he question is *of the order of the concept*” (G, 44a). Since Being is non-conceptual, since it cannot be grasped by the understanding, spirit provides an *example* that demonstrates this relation. This example uses finite terms to portray the infinite relation. The copula *is* allows man to categorise and hence to understand Being, the unity of division and unity, *through* the division into subject and object. But it also demonstrates that the unity of this *is* lays beyond understanding.

Unification, conciliation, and being, have the same sense, are equivalent in their signification. And in every proposition, the binding, agglutinating, ligamentary position of the copula *is* conciliates the subject and the predicate, laces one around the other, entwines one around the other, to form a single being. The *Sein* is constituted, reconstituted starting from its primordial division by letting itself be thought in a *Bindewort* [copula, conjunction] (G, 56a).

Binding is not the unification of what were originally separate elements, but rather the re-unification after a division that was never, in truth, a division. This produces out of itself the

¹² If man’s reason and understanding imitates that of spirit, it is here possible to imagine the process operating in the opposite direction. Hegel thinks that spirit divides in order to think itself because division is the way in which man thinks. I will return to this possible reversing of processes in Chapter Three.

ontological proposition in general: S *is* P. All is united under the form of the *is*. It is not only the reconciliation between the infinite and the finite, but is also the infinite with the infinite; it is the reconciliation of spirit with spirit, God with God, man with man as “the unity of father-to-son ” (G, 56a). It is the reconciliation of what *is*: Being. Being is absolute unity. But division does not rest upon this origin as though upon a foundation. Rather, even in division there still *is* this unity. That is what must be felt.

A Scene Between

The Last Supper provides the scene in which Being disassembles itself, and displays the unity of this division. It appeals to both the understanding and the imagination. In order to do so, it remain(s) suspended between the question and its other, between the ‘what *is*’ and the ‘*is*’ ‘*is what is.*’ The *between* makes the question possible (G, 197a). The force of this demonstration comes in part from the scene’s syntactic place in the dialectic, its not quite belonging to the unity of Christianity, not *yet* at least. For in order to demonstrate the relation it must be caught somehow in the gap created by the *is*, that is, in the division between the subject and the object (or subject and predicate) of the kind S *is* P. On the one hand, the scene must be accessible to the understanding. On the other hand, it belongs to the unity of spirit which exceeds the limitations of the understanding. The scene must be divided or *in-between*. This places the scene *in* time. The Last Supper falls in (the) *between* of the three moments of religion. The first moment, natural religion, is surpassed by and becomes the object of esthetic religion, of the living work of art. Esthetic religion occupies the mediating position between natural religion and absolute religion. In the middle of this second moment, is the Last Supper, lodged in the centre of the centre. So it forms the hinge, the moment of separation and fusion *between* the two (G, 232a). It thus demonstrates the relation between subject and object, S *is* P by at-once playing on the opposition between subject and object *and* anticipating the relief of that opposition into the unity of absolute religion. If the Last

Supper scene teaches how to *think* Being then, it can only do so because it does not yet belong to religion, because it is the not-yet, perhaps even the *preface*, to the religious.

But love does not yet have access to religion, because this opposition between the finite and the infinite has not taken place in love, has not yet or no longer taken place. So the Last Supper, the love-feast, does not belong to a religious space. All of the acts of the Last Supper manifest love; love is present, near at hand there, but only by right of feeling. No image, no figure, no schema becomes detached or stands out here in order to unite feeling to representation, sensibility to concept (G, 65a).

This moment seems almost Jewish. Almost. The feast “hovers between a common table of friendship and a religious act, and this hovering makes it difficult to characterize distinctly its spirit” (Hegel, quoted in G, 65a). Is its function pedagogical, rhetorical, exemplary? Derrida appears to be suggesting that this ‘hovering’ between the two functions allows it to display their relation, to display the difference of the two operations, which permits this moment to pass from an act of communion to the truly religious. Derrida thus shows how the posit(ion)ing of the scene itself, that its syntactic location or place within the totality is decisive. In order for it to become a Christian moment, the opposition between the finite and infinite must be overcome, in other words, the opposition between the sensible immediacy of natural religion and the singular subjectivity of the esthetic moment must be relieved into absolute religion. Coming *between* these moments, the posit(ion)ing of the scene announces the same relation that the content of the scene imparts: relations can only be given through relations. Syntax here *enacts* the content and makes content possible. It is as, if not more, important than semantic depth. The Last supper is thus caught *between*.

The ‘More’ of Relations

The essence of the scene is the manifestation of the unity of Christ and God. It is not enough that the disciples declare their love for God and Christ; they must feel the one-ness of father and son, and to do so they must transcend their love which is, as yet, too natural. Enter what

Derrida calls the 'more.' This 'more' is the religious, which intervenes to re-establish an objectivity without which love alone would be incomplete. Love, by itself, would cause the subject to turn in on itself in a kind of natural subjectivity. Christianity makes the object intervene, makes subjectivity *relate* itself to an object, as father and son relate to one another. For this to take place, both the opposition and the imagination must be put to work to produce a finite representation of the infinite. According to the opposition of sensory and nonsensory, a form must be detached, stand out and be made to appear, a finite object which can act as an image of the infinite spirit. Henceforth, religion will be the adoration of this image. But this image is not a Judaic, finite representation of the infinite. Indeed, it must not be thought of as a representation, which implies a substitution, an 'S standing-in-place-of P.'

For what takes place in the Last Supper scene is the annulment of this form of substitution, exchange, and 'standing-in-place-of.' The difference between the Jewish and the Christian faith makes itself felt in the distinction between this 'S standing-in-place-of P' and the Christian "judicative" proposition 'S is P' (along with the intervention of the father). The Last Supper forms an act of friendship and communion. But it also goes beyond this. The disciples *think* themselves *together* in the act of sharing and communion. Through this they think God and Christ together. This is not a question of a mere sign or symbol of their unity. Rather it is a felt experience. But this is not-yet religion, since there is, as yet, no object as such. When Jesus adds 'more' to this act of consum(mat)ing, there is a glimpse of the religious.

What then is the nature of this surplus, this more? Presupposed throughout, this more does not take itself into account, cannot give rise to an objective calculus, to a discursive explanation. It does not relate itself to any "objects." The relation it enters without ever belonging there, no analysis can account for according to the ways of comparison or analogy. [...] The *Mehr* [more] in question is neither equal nor unequal to any object; it is *as* nothing, it resembles, reassembles, itself with nothing like the *as* (G, 67a).

Grasping this 'more' comes down to establishing what happens when Jesus says that the bread is his body and the wine his blood. How and why is the bread his body, the wine his blood; according to what logic are these related? Firstly, it is not Derrida says, "a question of a sign, a comparison, or an allegory. In the sign, the relation between the signifier and the signified, between the sign and the designated remains a relation of conventional exteriority. What links the members of signification to each other still remains an objective ligament" (G, 66a). As I established earlier, the relation between the signifier and signified is not a living, spiritual unity, but an objective ligament that binds what are essentially "strangers" (G, 66a). This ligament is a 'thought' ligament, a third term that belongs properly to the understanding and memory, to the productive imagination that produces conventional signs. This might be the Jewish way, but in the Last Supper, in what is a *felt* communion, the third term disappears, is "properly consum(at)ed. The sign is gulped down" (G, 66a).

Jesus asks the disciples to take the bread and wine 'in' his memory. But "why already memory in the present feeling?" Derrida asks (G, 65a). The answer lies in the kinship between memory and thought. For when Jesus says 'Drink this wine in memory of me,' he is also saying 'Think me,' 'Think Being.' This filiation between memory and thought is no accident: as soon as one attempts to 'think' one is already involved in an act of memory or memorial, for to think within the limits of the understanding is to think finitely, and the finite is always linked to death. To think the death of Jesus is to think his relief in(to) God, his return to the father. And what is crucial in this scene is that it is not a matter of merely thinking, but also of drinking and consuming Christ, and thereby enacting the very unity in question.

When Jesus declares that the wine *is* his blood he adds an object through this declaration, a manifestation that explains *S is P*. He adds an object that cannot be seen, the relation itself.

In providing a finite image of the infinite, however, this is not a representation in the Jewish sense. The wine doesn't simply represent blood; the bread doesn't simply represent the body. He is declaring that they *are* the blood and the body, expelled from the inside (spirit) to the outside (matter). They are cut out of the infinite, detached, given form, but in essence, they still *are* spirit. So not only *is* the wine blood, but the blood *is* spirit. From then on, this proposition constitutes an objective judgement that in turn opens the religious space. When Jesus states 'This is my body,' he names the relation through the *apparition* of the ligament, of the copula *is*, and of the pair. This apparition "produces an object exceeding the interiority of feeling" (G, 66a). This judicative declaration, endorsed by Christ's own act of "*parceling out*, of dividing [amongst the disciples], in order to consum(mat)e them together, the bread and the wine, expels feeling outside of itself and makes it 'in part objective '" (G, 67a). The *is* is objectified. The relation itself is expelled in order that the union be visible, objectified. Now this objectification does not produce an object like any other, there is still more than can be seen, but this more is represented in the image of the *relation*. It is not the intelligible that has been objectified, but rather the *relation* between the sensible and the intelligible.

That is why it can be never purely objective, nor purely subjective. It must *remain between*. In consum(mat)ing the wine, they drink the blood of Christ, consume him, feel him inside of them. In engaging with the 'this *is* that' and in recognising that all is united in Jesus and hence in God, their union or communion becomes more than sensible, more than simply the sharing of a common cup which would signify, formally or symbolically, their union. It is a felt union, yet is at-once more than internal, since it is objectified. Their internal union is expelled outward, made visible on the outside, and thus objectified: "the thing is essentially consum(mat)ed, the process of consum(mat)ing constitutes it as thing rather than breaching/broaching it as such" (G, 71a). The thing-ness of the thing, its objectivity, is constituted only in the act of consum(mat)ing that holds it both inside and outside. It exists

to the extent that it is both and neither, at-once. As Derrida says, consum(at)ing interiorizes, idealizes, relieves (G, 69a). The exterior is consumed, the object vanishes as object; it consummates with the interior, becomes subjective again with ingestion.

If [the disciples] are made alike simply as recipients of an advantage, a benefit, accruing from a sacrifice of body and an outpouring of blood, then they would only be united in a like concept. But because they eat the bread and drink the wine, because his body and his blood pass over into them, Jesus is in them all, and his essence, 'as love,' has divinely penetrated them. [...] The spirit of Jesus, in which his young disciples are *one*, has become present as object, an actuality, for external sense. Yet the love made objective, this subjective element becomes thing again, reverts once more to its nature, becomes subjective again in the eating. This return may perhaps in this respect be compared with the thought that in the written word becomes a thing and recaptures its subjectivity out of an object, out of something dead, when we read (Hegel, quoted in G, 69a).

The object of the understanding is relieved. It disappears as finite object, as that which is insufficiently reappropriable (soulless, inanimate matter). But it has produced an exteriority of feeling that, by being expelled outside and by opening a structure of exemplarity, has been made accessible to the understanding. Matter and the corporeal vanishes; only living feeling is present. The spirit of the Last Supper consum(mat)es its signs, loves without remain(s) (G, 71a). This destruction of the object at once prohibits access to the religious, places that access in the future (reconciliation), but also keeps love in sight of the religious, keeps signs of it, but internally. Once consum(mat)ed, without remains or leftovers, the mystical object becomes subjective again (G, 71a). The food becomes food, naturalized, bereft of its divine quality. It ceases to be the object of religious adoration. And Derrida says that this would apply equally if the food were not consumed: "Their divinity stands, very precariously, between swallowing and vomiting; and it is neither solid nor liquid, neither outside nor in" (G, 71a). Consumption destroys the form; once consum(mat)ed, it is as nothing: "The value of the dust lay in the form" (G, 71a). So that "Once eaten [...] the bread swallows up with itself the possibility of a properly religious adoration. Whence the mourning, the feeling of

loss, of regret, of split that seizes the young friends of Christ when the divine has melted in their mouths ” (G, 72a).

The Possibility and Impossibility of Comparison

As such, unity is no longer just “represented” in an “image” or an “allegorical figure” (G, 67a). Hegel dictates that the relation itself, the unity, is *present*. But caution is required here. This ‘more’ that has been added, the presence of the relation itself, cannot give rise to an objective calculus or a discursive explanation. While man can say ‘this *is* that,’ he cannot say ‘this *is equal* to that.’ This ‘more’ cannot be accounted for according to the logic of comparison or analogy. The ‘more’ is not equal to anything, it is *as* nothing, it resembles, reassembles itself with nothing like the *as*. The ‘*just as – so*’ cannot envelop, cannot *think* unity. The issue remains, outside any mathematical formalism, of the part taking part.

It is not as if one were saying: just as the particular, divided, singular morsels you eat are from *one and the same* bread, just as the wine you drink, you drink it from *one and the same* cup, so you are divided or separated, particulars, cut off from one another, but in love, in spirit, you are *one*, one and the same *being*, together (G, 67a).

This applies to all instances of the *as*. Love is not a ligament, a synthesis, which simply holds together the objective and the subjective, is not the ligament of “the compared with a comparison” (Hegel, quoted in G, 68a). The bond does not exist outside the parts, it could not be abstracted or conceptualised in-itself. This relation can only be given through relation. Which means that though it is present whilst it remains caught in the relation, it nowhere simply *is*. The relation *is* not present, yet as *what is*, it is everywhere present. This for Hegel, is what the Jews cannot comprehend because it is beyond the categories of the understanding that could separate out the composition of this unity. Hegel says that the Last Supper does not offer a “parable,” in which “the compared is set forth as severed, as separate” (G, 68a), nor does it offer a comparison that requires thinking the equality of

different. Rather, the copulation or binding must be thought of as a “penetration” (G, 68a), in which diversity disappears, and with it the very possibility of a comparison. Heterogeneous parts exist, but *belong* to one another, are bound, enveloped in each other in a most intimate way; through the *is*. “So the act of *verbinden* does not merely signify the upsurging of an objectivity through the operation of a holy copula; it also annuls the opposition of dissimilars, effaces the discontinuity of all objectivity” (G, 68a). What Derrida calls the ‘comparative structure’ makes ‘comparison possible, allowing the understanding to grasp the relation of finite to infinite, and at-once impossible, by exceeding comparison and gesturing towards reason as infinite unity.

The sharing of the cup, the fact of drinking together, the swallowing of the same liquid, is in spirit a “new bonding” (G, 68a). This new bonding will call itself absolute religion, the absolute unity of spirit. Yet the act of drinking itself does not fulfil the promise of unity; this unity is “not given, is not present” (G, 68a). Rather it opens the possibility of this promise, “presents itself only in the expectation of another coupling that will come to fulfil, accomplish what is announced or broached/breached here” (G, 68a). The announcement fills the void left in the absence of absolute synthesis. For in truth, absolute unity has not been achieved, only projected, mapped out and anticipated. If the phenomenal were a direct emanation of God, it would be immediately divine. This is not possible according to the necessities of freedom and recognition which say that emanation must be worked over by negativity. Nevertheless, the phenomenal is still an emanation, a part of the infinite. This contradiction is thinkable only through a familial determination of the concept of emanation, which transforms “the continuous production flowing from the source naturally” into emanation which works harder, which is *no longer* something that is bestowed like a gift to humanity but is a relation of the living to the living that must be worked for/over by discontinuity, division, negativity. Life and division go together and with them sight, since

the divisions of being is just what opens it to truth (through self-knowledge) (G, 77a). This remains true for the *logos*. The *logos* is not something other than spirit. God and *logos* are one. "But different insofar as God is the content in the form of the *logos*. Only the understanding requires such a distinction and only the understanding can thus oppose them" (G, 72a).

What Derrida brings out of Hegel's reading of Christianity is the way in which the immortality, the 'life,' of Christ consists in letting itself be thought, of giving itself over to thought. Christ lets man feel his life and through it the life of God and the infinite movement of spirit. The operation of thinking comes down to thinking the *is*, that is, to thinking the re-unification of that which the understanding has divided, to bringing them together again in the *is*. The spiritual life that passes through and gathers the set *S is P* together, should never have been divided. This division introduces finitude and abstraction. "Such a scissionist operation presupposes, as its unthought or unreflected, just what it gives the form of reflection to: the one, the unique, in which no partitioning and thus no objectifying judgement could take place. Simultaneously it must pre-suppose the possibility of division, of the infinite separation, then the unity of unity and separation, of reality and thought, and so on" (G, 76-77a). Division thus *belongs* properly to the one; the whole is possible only on the basis that it be thought in parts.

To think is to think being, and to think being as immortal is to think its life. To think being as life in the mouth, that is the *logos*. Being, life, father, and son are equal in the infinite unity of the *logos* (G, 72a).

The *logos* is at-once a condition of possibility and impossibility of man's feeling for the infinite unity. Consistent with all other forms of emanation, the *logos* itself is the word of spirit (God). Only God can speak the truth. But God does not speak directly, presently. He speaks through his son. This becomes a question of emphasis: God *names the relation*

through the son; the relation thus named (through the son) then allows him to name the relation *through* the son. So the *logos* too lets itself be worked over by the division and discontinuity which the declaration, the *logos*, itself institutes. 'Life,' filiation, which constitute Christ's being, his essence, can be revealed, attested, declared, only by the father. Only the producer can declare the value of the product. This declaration itself forms the bond, the relation, between them.

Life is Metaphoricity

The content of the scene allows the syntax to have the effect it does; the syntax allows the content its force. This is the very nature of the whole thought in parts, the inexpressible unity of 'life' as dismemberment and reunion, of representation as containing the infinite and being contained by it. Hegel determines the relation, the binding that God declares, as 'life.' The father names 'life' and 'life' names the *Aufhebung*. The bond of 'life' holds God and Jesus together, the infinite and finite. Jesus is a part or a member of life, but a member in which the infinite whole is internally regrouped, remembered. As such, what binds is 'life,' the unity which remains beyond the categories of the understanding. Derrida says that Hegel's dialectic can be thought as the tree of life: "The whole circulates in it, from the root toward the top through all the parts. The whole already resides in *le gland*" (G, 73a). Yet again, another sensory metaphor, the tree, explains the metaphor of 'life' because this binding is *essentially* incomprehensible. Because the understanding lives on opposition one cannot *understand* the true sense of this spiritual relation, 'life' as at-once the part *and* the partitioning, the morsel and the whole, its own proper difference, its own proper self-division. Man cannot *conceive* how each living part is the whole, how 'life' divides the whole in order to produce more 'wholes.' This incomprehensible is the *zugleich*, the structural at-once of the living whole and morsel (G, 77-78a).

The bond holds God and Jesus together, the infinite and the finite; of this life, Jesus is a part, a member, but a member in which the infinite whole is integrally regrouped, remembered. Such is life's secret, the remembrance, the inner recollection of the whole in the morsel, that mysterious and incalculable operation the Jews could not comprehend. [...] one must make the father enter the son and think them together, gather them together in one same elevation. That is the essence of life as reconciliation and the essence of being, essence itself as life. Being measures up to thinking-together in the inner binding; being is self-equality in infinite reconciliation (G, 72a).

Significantly however, the unity and integrity of the One, of God or spirit, would not be possible without division. Division does not happen like an accident to truth. This apparent metaphoricity is life's essence or rather 'life' (relation) as the essence of being. When one does not *feel* life, the metaphor is only an accessory, a rhetorical auxiliary without its own proper truth. But "[w]hen one feels it from the inside, one knows that life is metaphoricity, the alive and infinite bond of the whole thought in parts" (G, 73a). To miss this is to suffer the underdevelopment of reason, to be enclosed in the limits of the understanding. It is to be Jewish. But if one reads properly, everything will go otherwise, one will feel the inner binding that is 'life.' The apparent contradictions of absolute knowledge (for example, what was posited must be annulled, is annulled in the positing and so forth) are formal and finite only for the understanding.

Reflected upon and divided, considered from the viewpoint of the partitioning at once dividing and making possible the object of a judgement, life is at once subject and predicate, the synthesis of existence and thought universality: at once life and life thought, grasped, light, truth. Life is life, life is light, life is truth (G,78a).

Man must open himself to the light of truth. In principle, this light is not new to man; the light was in man and man alienated himself from it, from the truth of spirit. For Hegel the *already* is this truth which has been lost, divided, in order to be re-appropriated. The recognition of the light is then the conscious grasp of a revelation already there, the retrieval of primordial subjectivity. This process is a process of family reappropriation, of the son returning to the father, the father asserting his paternal rights. To recognise oneself as at

home in light is to find one's essence in God. The Jews are unable to recognise themselves in God, disbelieving that God is God their father. What the Jews are unable to comprehend is that which lies beyond the limits of comprehension and the finite understanding.

The unity of father and son is not conceptual, for every conceptual unity lives on opposition, is finite. Now life is infinite. If the living relation of father to son is life as a nonconceptual unity, every conceptual unity presupposes that relation, implies that nonconcept as the concept's production, the concept's nonconceptual conception. The living conception is the relation of father to son. This conception forms a contradiction in the logic of the understanding, here of the Jew, who cannot master it – precisely because he intends to master. One masters only finite life – or death.

(G, 80a).

This nonconceptual unity, which cannot be understood in the abstract and finite logic of the understanding and thus requires metaphor, means that for Derrida, “metaphoricity also hands over every concept's condition of possibility” (G, 80a). The life of spirit *is* its unity and division. That unity and division is the *is* of *what is*. The life of the spirit is named through the natural life in which it grows. But between the two lives, *analogy* makes metaphor possible. Life is the syllogism and the movement of the syllogism. It has been shown how life first appears as a natural and immediate determination: the spirit outside itself, detached into the natural life which itself constitutes a smaller syllogism. The immediate Idea has the form of ‘life.’ But the absolute idea in its infinite truth is still ‘life,’ true life, life without death, the life of truth. Between the two lives, there is death and the movement of spirit as the production of ideality. But this is also the space of metaphoric play, of analogy named under the heading of filiation. ‘Life’ does not have a literal sense, does not have here or there its own property. ‘Life’ produces itself as the circle of its own reappropriation, the self-return before which there is no proper self. ‘Life’ is metaphoricity. The idea, immediate and natural life, relieves, abolishes, and preserves itself, dies in raising itself to the spiritual ‘life.’ This is what is to be learned from the family and all preceding determinations of ‘life.’ So ‘life’ develops in contradiction and negativity, is produced by the relieving work of the *Aufhebung*.

It forms both the positivity and the negativity of the synthesis, the metaphor between these two lives is only this movement of relieving negativity. “The third term, returning to immediacy, this return to simplicity being brought about by the relief of difference and mediation, natural life occupies both the end and the beginning. In their ontological sense, the metaphors are always of life; they put the rhythm into the imperturbable equality of life, of being, of truth, of filiation: *phusis* ” (G, 83a).

2.3 The *Aletheia* of *Aletheia*

The family theatre organizes this theory of judgement whose schema is already fixed for the whole future of Hegelian logic. It is dominated by the Johannine values of life and light, that is, truth (G, 76a).

What occurs in the passage from Judaism to Christianity is a transformation of belief in the possibility of infinite knowledge. In opposition to the Jewish belief that ‘man can know nothing of God’ comes the inauguration of a truly spiritual philosophy, a phenomenology of consciousness in which this ‘incomprehensibility’ is overcome. Hegel’s negativity does not proceed along the lines of ‘all save the true can be known’ (G, 212a). The true must, *de jure* and *de facto*, be knowable. It must reveal itself and man must be not only open to it, but also in some sense trained and ready to meet it. The Last Supper reveals how the infinite spirit of God reveals itself and instructs how to read that revelation. Indeed, Christianity goes so far as to name itself the ‘revealed religion’ (G, 213a), a religion that has superiority over other religions according to the very set of values that it establishes. As Derrida puts it, the “Christian religion is true because it is the religion of truth, manifestation, and revelation” (G, 212a). It brings together sensible, finite and immediate intuition with what is beyond the limitations of comprehension into the synthetic unity of an infinite knowledge that, as infinite, no longer ought to have any exteriority. Christianity announces the absolute self-presence of infinite knowledge, “presence that knows itself since it is infinite and has no outside, truth that announces itself to itself, resounds and reflects itself in its own proper element: the manifest, the revealed, *das Offenbaren*” (G, 212a).

Thus does Christianity represent the production and relief of exteriority, of metaphor and representation. In this, the question of time with which this thesis began is crucial. Firstly, time is the production of exteriority. Despite the projected dismissal of the sensible and exterior, Hegel nonetheless associates truth with ‘giving-to-see,’ with metaphor as the whole

thought in parts, with manifestation as the act that makes meaning.¹³ Metaphor describes how spirit thinks itself through the production of the detour through space (matter, the sensible, the outside) and through time (as the truth/relief of space). Metaphor thus describes the movement of spirit as the production and relief of metaphor. Spirit comes to know itself when it gives itself over in/as metaphor such that it can be known to man and known to itself. This is the necessity behind all that spirit opposes to itself. For the outside must not act as a disease that adds itself to the inside, thus contaminating and threatening that original purity. This addition would be-itself outside of the inside. Neither however, can this outside be coeval with the inside since that would threaten the very identity and integrity of the origin by revealing it to be always already divided. Hegel must insist that the outside *comes after* the inside *and* that it *belongs* to the inside. The inside must *decide* to divide itself into the outside and therefore *produce* the outside. The integrity of the entire dialectic hinges on this process and temporality of production and belonging; the father *produces* the son, the son *is* the father, the son will *return to* the father (which he still *is*). The process of addition, of supplementation by the outside, must itself be produced by spirit. This production of the detour through metaphor is a condition of possibility for spirit's self-knowledge. Metaphor is a condition of possibility for truth. As is its relief. For spirit's self-knowledge can only be truly achieved when spirit emerges out of the detour. Therefore, time must relieve space and itself be relieved. Spirit is the truth of the relief of exteriority. Hegel seeks to overcome external, empirical and historical time through its relief into the internal, a-temporal and eternal time of spirit. This possibility is described in the Last Supper scene which, as a metaphor, takes place in time and describes the relief of time, which is also its own relief.

¹³See *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision* (1993, University of California Press, LA) and *Sites of Vision: The Discursive Construction of Sight in the History of Philosophy* (1997, The MIT Press, Massachusetts) in which David Michael Levin convincingly argues that, while reluctant to "formulate grand narratives," Derrida views modernity as ocularcentric, "dominated by vision and a paradigm of knowledge, truth, and reality that is vision generated, vision based, and vision centred" (Levin, 1997, 399-400).

Thus does Hegel seek to close the system back upon itself, to reunify all its dispersions into the telos of absolute knowledge which is none other than the origin, spirit. The Last Supper describes this movement of expropriation and reappropriation. But, and this point is crucial, the only way in which the Last Supper scene can describe this possibility is by being *between* time and its relief. Which also means being *between* exemplarity and the institution of exemplarity. For the power of the family lays not only ⁱⁿ its ability to describe the workings of the *Aufhebung*. Only at the moment when it describes these relations do they come into being. So the articulation, the description, is in fact a prescription, an institutionalisation and establishment of normative relations. Only when the structure is exemplified is the structure opened. The economy of revelation, in which finite representation is *produced* by, *belongs* to, and *contains* the infinite, is instituted by being revealed. It can act as an example of revelation because of it opens the possibility of exemplarity, of comparison and analogy, in a truly spiritual sense. The scene is made possible by the very relations it institutes, which then allow it to be its own condition of possibility. The Last Supper thus reveals and, through revelation, institutes truly spiritual relations. It is the *aletheia* of *aletheia*.

The father-son relation thus has a special place in the system. It reveals the relation between spirit and its other as one of production, representation and revelation that takes place according to family time, time as opposition and relief. The father-son relation is the first moment when the unity and division of opposition is truly articulated. This relation thus produces, reveals and represents the structure of production, revelation and representation. Jesus inaugurates, articulates and presents a discourse about the relation, revealing the structure of revelation that allows him to reveal the structure of revelation; he represents the structure that allows him, as son, to represent the father. The Last Supper thus reveals the tightly knit play, a kind of circular play, in which structure *as such* is produced *and* articulated, revealed *and* represented. This moment stands as a prescriptive model that has a

place *within* the system and as an example that *detaches* itself as a lesson and guide to reading that model. This entire possibility is condensed in the proposition 'the father is the son.' The family gives relations before the institutionalisation of relations, which then can retrospectively explain and legitimate the relations that have preceded it, the not-yets of this *already*. Such is the temporality of the dialectic.

Thus time, being *between* time and its relief, *between* the description and the institutionalisation of relations, makes the scene possible. Time determines the place of the scene within the structure as a whole, and the play of relations within the scene itself. But because of the contortions of such syntactic play it is impossible to separate out any kind of cause and effect. The Last Supper is an inaugural moment, productive. But what it produces was *always already* produced. It is therefore a *re*-presentation, a repetition of an inauguration. Yet as an inauguration these relations were *not-yet* until that moment. The family inaugurates and *at once* acts as a metaphor for that moment of emergence as though for a past event. And it can play both these roles only by being *between* representation and its fulfilment, *between* metaphor and what acts as a condition for metaphor, *between* inauguration and representation. It is *at once* both and neither, *belonging* not quite properly to both sides. And it is this being-*between* that carries the force of the Last Supper scene. The logic of the *always already* and the *not-yet* that twist temporality give to the father-son relation the power it has. But this logic and this temporality are produced by, and belong to, that very family:

Family time: there is no time but the family's. Time only happens in the family, as family. The opposition of the already, of the not-yet, of the already-no-more, everything that forms the time of not being present (*not-there*), everything that constitutes time as the *Dasein* of a concept that is not(-)there, the being-there of the not-there [...], all that is a family scene (G, 221a).

The declaration that the 'father *is* the son' is legitimated by this temporality of Hegelian logic: at the very moment God teaches relations through his son, he also makes possible that very teaching. The moment of enunciation makes possible a structure which legitimates the truth of that enunciation: God *names the relation* through the son, which then allows him to name the relation *through the son*, in an act of immanent performativity. Crucially, only by manifesting itself in this way, *in* the moment, can this structure that emerges be made to account for structurality in general; it *has* to articulate performativity *in* performativity, the relation between presentation and truth as the giving of an example *in* an example of this relation. What emerges out of the scene between father and son is the declaration (of relations) itself.

As such, the syntactic play of the *between* attaches the scene to the entire dialectic such that it can become a condition of possibility for all the relations of the dialectic. The family does not simply explain relations in the family. As the first moment of true unity, it explains the true unity which has underlain all of spirit's relations. Thus the local moment of the family extends its reach, pervading the entire dialectic. It is attached to every moment. It explains this attachment through detachment, by the giving of (itself as) an example. The Last Supper produces and reveals revelation, detaches it such that it can become an object for the understanding. But detachment is always already attachment. While it is detached it is at the same time still absolutely attached to the origin of the discourse. When Jesus speaks, it is God who is speaking through him. When the disciples drink the wine, they drink the blood of Christ who *is* his father. Both the declaration and what it represents are *between: between* the father and son, *between* attachment and detachment, *between* expropriation and reappropriation, outside *and* inside. And at no point is Hegel able to detach the relation further such that it could become a kind of equation, a matrix that could be abstracted and simply reapplied to any opposition. It cannot be further reduced, nor can it be severed from

the source of its production, but must be produced out of opposition, possible only when both parts of the opposition are in place. As such, what the relation teaches is that true unity can be given only through this division into the copula, when the link of the *is* remains in place, and can be exhibited.

This is, I think, what Derrida's reading in *Glas* brings to the fore: what makes the dialectic possible, what makes the family able to institute relations and to be an example of relations, to be a metaphor and more than metaphoric, is the *between*. The dialectic teaches that relations can be given only in and through relations. Only by being *between* attachment and detachment, *between* anticipation and fulfilment, *between* production and representation, inauguration and exemplarity can the scene have the force it does. Both sides of opposition are required, as is the maintenance of the link between them. And what has become apparent is that this is not simply because of the limitations to the understanding, but because relations are dependent on being maintained *as* relations *in* relations. This *between*, this need for relations and opposition, is the unity and separation that allows for the unity and separation inaugurated and exemplified in the statement 'the father *is* the son.' This *between* is, I believe, another name for *différance*. Each point can only be thought through its relation to another. Each point is too little, needs supplementation, but by that very fact, becomes too much, is always already *more*, an addition, an extra. While Hegel is the thinker of unity, Derrida says that "Hegel is *also* the thinker of irreducible *différance*" (OG, 26). Indeed, Derrida suggests elsewhere that "if there were a definition of *différance* it would be precisely the limit, the interruption, the destruction of the Hegelian *releve wherever* it operates" (P, 40-1). Is it the case then that Hegelian *différance* will be what disrupts the Hegelian *Aufhebung*?

In the next chapter I want to explore the family scene as that which articulates not unity, but *différance*. Or perhaps better, unity *as* *différance*, the *Aufhebung* *as* the movement of *différance* as the *between*. For there are some difficulties that Hegel cannot overcome and which, as the next chapter will show, open Hegel's restricted economy into what Derrida calls a general economy. Moreover, as I will investigate, these difficulties are actually necessary to the functioning of the system, conditions of possibility, and of impossibility, for it.

These difficulties once again locate themselves around metaphor, the need for the outside, for the remains, the addition or supplement. In other words, they belong to the family discourse. For the family cannot get beyond metaphoricity. Crucially, the very family that reveals the place and relief of metaphor cannot, itself, get beyond metaphor. The scene that teaches how to think being, how to think the erasure of metaphor, still needs metaphor. The infinite family thinks itself through the finite family which is itself already infinite. So that the Last Supper occupies a position *between*, between metaphor and its erasure in *Sa*. It is precisely this inability to overcome this need that gives the scene the power it has, for it can only teach of the *between*, of the relation *between* the infinite and finite, *between inside and outside*, by being *between*. And while Hegel anticipates the relief of the *between*, the moment of *Sa* when the need for metaphor erases itself, when truth is manifest in its own self-presence, the problem is that he can *only* project and anticipate this moment, through metaphor. Each act of relief, each moment when spirit frees itself from its outside, leads to another metaphor, to another relation with another outside. Hegel thus anticipates the relief of metaphor but this relief is not yet present, only represented.

As such, while that which exhibits the relation of inside and outside, in other words metaphor, remains, the truth behind the relation, the relation itself, is not present. The relation 'the father *is* the son' orders or governs this *being-between*, but it is a structure that *is not present*. It is only represented; dependent on metaphor, it can only give relation-ness through relations, can only *be* in relation. What escapes the grasp of the dialectic then, is what Derrida names "the comparative structure" (G, 70a). The comparative structure, that which makes the relation between inside and outside possible, is nowhere present. It *is not*. Yet it orders all that *is*, all spirit's movements and relations. It says that relations can only be given through relations, and that it *is* a relation that can only be given through relations. Hegel can never and will never make present the comparative structure itself, since it can only be presented through relations and is thus always bound to be something other than what it is, to be never itself, presently, purely, in its own identity. The very thing that makes relations possible, the very thing that makes presence possible, is not present; it is divided and it divides; it is supplemented and insists upon supplementarity. It cannot be asked what this comparative structure *is*, just as it cannot be asked what the *Aufhebung* *is*. The unity of relations, unity itself, cannot be made present. It can only ever be presented. This subtle addition of the -ed disrupts the unity and integrity of absolute knowledge.

In the next chapter I want to explore the possibility that Hegel is in fact articulating, and dependent upon, *différance*; that for Hegel, the law of the *Aufhebung* as the law of *belonging* can no longer designate a simple inclusion within a simple ideal interiority. In the introduction to this thesis I showed how, for Derrida, the law of genre is the very thing that escapes the law of genre. Similarly, the law of belonging cannot itself belong. The boundary or margin, the *between* between matter and truth, gets in the way, remains and yet is nowhere present. Which means that it also falls outside the system, refuses absolute reappropriation. It is both inside and outside, at-once. This is not a Hegelian circularity that points the way to

its own resolution, but an excess, a relation itself that cannot be (ac)counted (for). A certain exteriority, the relation itself, remains. What Derrida says of dissemination can also be said of this law of belonging: “The infinity of its code, its rift [...] does not take a form saturated with self-presence in the encyclopedic circle. It is attached, so to speak, to the incessant falling of *a supplement to the code*” (D, 52). In being an addition, it also threatens the concept of the origin as the unique One which is self-identical. Division always already *is*, “everything starts with the dyad. The dual opposition [...] organizes a conflictual, hierarchically structured field which can neither be reduced to unity, nor derived from a primary simplicity, nor dialectically sublated or internalized into a third term” (D, 25).

Chapter Three then, will be concerned with this ‘more’ and ‘less’ of Hegel’s system. The ‘more’ consists of the always more of metaphor, the need for the addition, the supplement, for what Derrida calls the ‘phantasm.’ If the outside is always needed, then the structure of reappropriation, in which the outside is excluded as not-the-truth and yet is maintained within the system as the outside of truth, is put into question. This is especially pertinent since the structure of reappropriation is a family structure, and yet the law of the family is the law of preservation, of remains and monuments. The ‘less’ consists in the absence of a primary simplicity, of a unified self-identical origin. For this origin would *be* the relation of the parts to the whole, the very unity in question. Yet neither this origin nor the relation are present. In this way I want to elaborate on the law of belonging, as that which Derrida thinks is quasi-transcendental for Hegel’s system. It is both inside and outside of the system, organising the field to which it cannot belong.

In order to explore these difficulties, I want to place all I have said so far in the context of *mimesis*. I hope to show that it is *mimesis*, as a movement of différance or as différant, which makes possible ‘the father *is* the son’ and the concept of representation as produced by

and belonging to, in other words, affiliated to, the origin, spirit. This *mimesis* organises and governs the order of revelation and representation, of analogy and exemplarity, of production and filiation, attachment and detachment. And by reading these structures as mimetic it is also possible to see why it is that things go awry, why the system cannot fulfil the promise of absolute unity and reappropriation. This problematic points to the significance of what Derrida is saying in his work on Hegel. For the opposition between inside and outside, which is the same as saying the opposition between spirit and matter, between the intelligible and the sensible, is so naturalised that questioning it goes against the very order of sense itself. However, by placing it in the context of *mimesis* it is possible to see that this naturalised structure is in fact a series of philosophemes, and that these are not ‘natural’ (just as the distinction between natural and unnatural is not ‘natural’) but conceptual. This reveals a complicity between natural language and metaphorical language. For example, Derrida’s example: what structure is in place to decide that a piece of knowledge can be clear or obscure (M, 252)? This distinction between clarity and obscurity belongs to a series of basic or fundamental tropes that are as much defining as defined, and yet have the semblance of naturality and neutrality. In what follows then, I want to pursue *mimesis* as the condition for metaphor, and thus as “the condition for truth” (M, 237). I hope to show that metaphor and *mimesis* are conditions of possibility, and impossibility, for Hegel’s speculative dialectic.

Chapter Three: Hegel and *Mimesis*

3.1 *Mimesis*: The Structure of Speculative Dialectics

In what follows I want to establish the relation between the Hegelian dialectic and the concept of *mimesis*. Before I do so however, I want to take a moment to summarise what has been learned so far from Derrida's reading of Hegel and to mark out the questions or problematics that have arisen from this reading.

In Chapter One I examined how spirit, in order to gain recognition of itself in its freedom, divides itself into opposition. In this way the dialectic works both through opposition (such as the opposition of spirit and matter) and its relief. This allows Hegel to ensure that all negativity (space, time, and so forth) belongs to the system as the means by which spirit becomes truly itself, and at the same time it legitimates the existence and the movement (the *Aufhebung*) of Hegel's philosophy. Manifestation is determined by Hegel as playing a crucial role in spirit's self-knowledge, each manifestation or formal moment acting as a determinate representative of spirit. One example of such a formal moment is that of the family. As Derrida's reading of this moment shows, Hegel's dialectic articulates an allegiance between sight and knowledge, love and the relief of law. The family is the first moment in which the unity of subjectivity and objectivity is beginning to be thought. The love of the Christian family relieves the divisive and disunified laws of its precedent, the Jewish (non-)family. Love is thus a rupture of the law, and particularly of the law of exchange. Love thus opens and articulates an economy in which the infinite can be seen in the finite, the intelligible in the sensible, spirit in matter. However, the first love that takes place in the family, that shared by the spouses, is too subjective. It therefore finds itself relieved into the universality of the child. This relief of love by love allows for the transition from subjectivity to the unity between subjectivity and objectivity. At the same time, it is through this relief that the family is preserved. For since truth is always the death of what it

is the truth of, the truth of the parents, the truth of their love, is reflected in “the mirror of the child” (G, 134a).

As such, Chapter One showed how, for Derrida, the process by which truth is reached, the process of the *Aufhebung*, plays a crucial role in Hegel’s dialectic. Manifestation is a productive negativity that, while not being the truth itself, is vital to the attainment of that truth. The outside thus belongs to the truth but *is not* the truth: “the finite *is not*” (M, 74). Spirit disperses itself into the phenomenal, the sensible, and so forth, which act as its “mirror” or its “reflection” (Hegel quoted in G, 117a). But spirit only allows this dispersion with a view to committing “violence to these figures in order to free itself from them. This operation, ‘this action of spirit is philosophy’” (G, 117a). Such is Hegel’s logic of internal and external necessity, which teaches that the outside is produced by, belongs to, and will be relieved back into, the inside. It anticipates the completion of the dialectic, the moment when it will fold back over itself in an act of absolute reappropriation.

Yet a difficulty remained. In order to understand the true unity of this movement of expropriation and reappropriation (and this is necessary if the path to absolute *Sittlichkeit* is to be realised) Hegel needs to articulate love. For love manifests and embodies unity, even in division. But since love, as unity, is beyond the finite categories of the understanding, to put love into language is precisely to divide it into finite categories and thus miss its very essence. The question with which Chapter two began was therefore a question of how Hegel could express love. Could the family in some way allow for the expression of love without harming it, and would the family thus be more than simply one formal moment among others? In order to answer these questions I explored Derrida’s reading of the family in more detail. The family is often used by Hegel as a metaphor for relations in general. *Glas* reveals a complex relation in which the family is both produced by the *Aufhebung* (the *Aufhebung* of

love) and is a metaphor for truly spiritual relations (the *Aufhebung* of love). The metaphor thus signifies the very thing that has produced it. And by reading Derrida's work on Hegel's concept of metaphor it became apparent that the situation was more complex still. For Derrida, metaphorisation is an *Aufhebung*. As such, metaphor in general and the specific metaphor of the family are produced by the movement of the *Aufhebung*, and yet the metaphor of the family is supposed to clarify and explain the *Aufhebung*. It was thus seen how each term looks to another to explain itself, each points to another for its meaning. This very circularity is a family circularity. Consequently, the metaphor of the family could no longer be considered to be a simple aid to the understanding. The *Aufhebung* is the movement of metaphorisation, metaphor is an *Aufhebung*. It began to emerge that metaphor is perhaps the very way in which spirit thinks itself. This suggested that the family metaphor can no longer be simply metaphoric, or alternatively, the concept of metaphor must be rethought. And it posed a further question: If metaphor *is* the very way in which spirit thinks itself, does it play a role in constituting the dialectic instead of being a mere example and product of it?

In order to establish whether this is the case, I then examined Derrida's reading of relations in the Last Supper scene. This scene detaches relations such that they can be grasped by the understanding. At the same time it keeps these relations attached to the dialectic so that they do not deviate from the structure they are articulating. This then, is the very structure in question, one of attachment and detachment. This is thought out in the proposition 'the father *is* the son.' From this proposition others follow: the infinite *is* the finite, the infinite family *is* the finite family, and so forth. The Last Supper thus teaches that true unity is the whole thought in parts. This is metaphoricity; it allows for the truth to be seen through its repetition, and for the example to reflect the model. And since the truth only becomes itself at the moment it presents itself, so the articulation of these relations is the truth of these

relations. The family metaphor thus not only exemplifies relations; it inaugurates them. As such, the family is a formal moment; it is a metaphor; and, perhaps more significantly, *as* a metaphor it is also a condition of possibility for truly spiritual relations, including that of metaphoricity. It teaches that this is only possible because of its position *between* (between attachment and detachment, between inauguration and repetition, between truth and its presentation). This in turn reveals the semantic content of the *between* as a matrix of relations and differences. This matrix is summarised in the proposition 'the father is the son.' It says both opposition and unity, relations and differences.

From this, several questions present themselves to which I want to respond in this chapter. Firstly, exactly what is the relation that allows for spirit to divide itself and for that division to produce an 'outside' which can act as spirit's 'double,' 'mirror' and 'reflection'? Secondly, if spirit can only know itself in division, and if spirit only becomes itself as a result of mediation and recognition, *what is* spirit before this process has begun? Can spirit begin life as a unified origin and a totality? And finally, Hegel says that the outside both does and does not exist, and that spirit's action is to do "violence to figures." Nonetheless, it has been shown that "metaphor hands over every concept's condition of possibility" (G, 80a). Spirit thinks itself through metaphor according to the process of metaphorisation. Hegel anticipates the relief of metaphor but, crucially, the outside is needed in order to articulate that relief. In other words, while Hegel anticipates the relief of metaphor he only does so *through* metaphor. Can metaphor, representation, the 'double' or the 'mirror' still be done away with according to the logics of internal and external necessities? Since relations can only be thought *in* and *as* relations, can relief be thought outside of relations? Can spirit extricate itself from the contamination it has set in motion? Moreover, is this contamination, this play of attachment and detachment or this being *between*, another name for *différance*?

It is these questions that this chapter seeks to address. The answer to them, I believe, hinges on the very first question: what is it that allows spirit to divide from itself and, through such division, to produce that which can represent it? What structure is in place which says that spirit can divide from itself and produce an object that is capable of representing it? At the beginning of Chapter One I suggested that what interests Derrida, and indeed Hegel, is the margin between philosophy and its outside. For what is a margin such that it can relate inside and outside, origin and repetition, truth and presentation? One way of thinking the margin is through *mimesis*, as that which opens up the relation *between* truth and its presentation; in other words, as that which allows for both their relation and their difference. In this chapter I want to explore this possibility in the context of Derrida's reading of Hegel. More specifically, I want to suggest that *mimesis* organises the relation between the origin and its products, between spirit and matter, the father and the son. I hope to show that *mimesis* plays a crucial role in the economy that allows the origin to produce and to be represented by what it produces.

This question will once again circulate around the family. As I have established, Hegel's father-son relation exemplifies, institutes and prescribes the relations of exchange, substitution and economy. It determines (and is determined by) how parts are produced by, relate to, and represent a whole. The son is produced by and represents the father. Indeed the son goes beyond representation; he *is* the father and will return to the father through a movement of expropriation and reappropriation. It is this movement of production and representation, a movement that takes place between the origin (God, father, spirit) and its telos (God, father, spirit), that I shall argue is mimetic. And if it is mimetic, *mimesis* will then be important in explaining how parts move around in a totality, how an origin or totality is able to produce parts that add themselves as supplements to the whole, a whole that in principle should require no supplementation. *Mimesis* can thus be thought of as playing an

important role in organising and legitimating substitution, repetition, supplementation, metaphor, and so forth. Indeed, *mimesis* would be that which introduces philosophy to itself, allows the truth to get to know itself through its repetition and reflection. As will become apparent however, *mimesis* is also différent. Through the dismantling and displacement of the hierarchy of oppositional thought and the uncovering of a certain duplicity at work in *mimesis*, Derrida shows how *mimesis* disrupts the very order of order it puts into effect.

The question then, is what structure or concept underpins the relations of production, metaphoricity and representation? Before I respond, I first want to make clear the nature of my reading here. I do not think that Hegel ‘consciously decides’ that the structure of the dialectic is *mimetic*. He certainly does not name it as such. Nor does Derrida name it *mimesis*; in *Glas* Derrida does not say that the relation between father and son, inside and outside, intelligible and sensible is mimetic or governed by *mimesis*. So this is perhaps where I depart from the letter of *Glas*, only however to come back to it. For it is a case of piecing together certain points, linking what Derrida does say regarding *mimesis* and what he does say regarding Hegel, in order to draw out this possibility. In ‘Economimesis’ Derrida writes of *mimesis* in the context of Kant. Likewise, in ‘White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy’ *mimesis* appears primarily in the context of Aristotle. In *Dissemination*, particularly in ‘Plato’s Pharmacy’ in which Derrida notes the connection between paternity, filiation and the concept of *mimesis*, the context is that of Plato. My reading of *Glas* here is motivated and informed by all these texts, a matter of forging the link between the Hegelian family and Derrida’s readings of *mimesis*. With this in mind, the first section of this chapter is concerned with exploring just what *mimesis* might mean for Derrida and with marking out points of connection and affiliation between this *mimesis* and Hegel’s dialectic.

Introducing Mimesis

What is understood by the term *mimesis*? The first thing that springs to mind is *mimesis* as imitation, something being a copy or likeness of something else. But in 'Economimesis' Derrida suggests that there is another level of *mimesis* which underlies *mimesis* as imitation.¹ This other level is what I shall call primary *mimesis* and, as I hope to show, it is a condition for imitation, resemblance, likeness. This primary concept of *mimesis* concerns itself with relations of productivity. In what follows I want to assess whether this *mimesis* has something to do with Hegelian recognition and its attendant concepts, concepts such as opposition, freedom, and representation. In other words, I want to establish whether *mimesis* has a role to play in the process by which Hegelian spirit departs from itself, becomes for-itself, and returns to itself.

In order to establish what *mimesis* might mean for Derrida I want to turn first to 'Economimesis,' in which Derrida explores *mimesis* in the context of Kant's 'Third Critique,' the *Critique of Judgement*. While Kant is not the subject of this study, this essay does provide a useful starting point for articulating the *mimesis* in question since it offers one of Derrida's most substantial pieces on *mimesis*. However, there is also a risk involved. Kant and Hegel are, on the matter of revelation and representation, diametrically opposed. *Glas* shows how, within Hegel's dialectic, Kant is positioned as a Jew (G, 213a) who believes that "we can know nothing of God" (G, 211a). In contrast, as *Glas* repeatedly demonstrates, Hegel believes in a God who manifests himself and in Christianity as the religion of truth as revelation. Derrida stages a discussion between Kant and Hegel. Hegel's question to Kant is: "if in piety the question is pleasing God the Father and taking pleasure in law (Kant), [...]" how would that be possible if we were enclosed in the phenomenon and left God beyond

¹ Jacques Derrida, 'Economimesis,' (Diacritics, Summer 1981, Johns Hopkins University Press, Cornell University), 4. Henceforth, the title of this text will be abbreviated as EC.

knowledge”? (G, 211a). In response, Kant “reproaches those who believe they know God” with “degrading religion to religious folly, to the delirium of arrogance or to fetishism” (G, 211a). For Kant, Hegel’s “fetishism” lies in his ability to see “God present in sensible finitude” (G, 217a). Not without irony it is, for Hegel, Kant who is engaged with the fetish. For he does not see the unity, the very presence of God in the finite; he holds himself within the limits of the sensible and the understanding, seeing only the object rather than infinite unity (G, 217a).

As Derrida demonstrates in this staged debate, for both Hegel and Kant the other interprets the meaning of the object incorrectly. It seems then, that reading Derrida’s work on Kantian *mimesis* should have no relevance to any reading of Hegel and *mimesis*. Except perhaps for this: what comes through Derrida’s reading in ‘Economimesis’ is that while, for Kant, the infinite presence of God is not present in the finite works of man, while the object cannot resemble (or reassemble) the divine, man nonetheless repeats the *method* of productivity that God utilises in his own productivity. As Derrida says, Kant “breaks with *mimesis*, understood as imitation of what is, only to identify [...] with the free unfolding-refolding of the *physis*” (EC, 6). Just as nature will reflect itself in physis, so man will reflect himself in his own productions. There is an analogy between divine production and human production. And by understanding this analogy, it becomes possible to see that perhaps there is also an analogy between the productivity of the Kantian God and the productivity of the Hegelian God. What is in question here then, is a certain complicity in Kant’s and Hegel’s understanding of the ‘production of production’ at the origin. Their interpretations of the meaning and value of what is produced (revelation or fetish) may differ, but there is an affiliation in their sense of production. In this way it becomes clear, as Derrida says in the opening to ‘Economimesis,’ that *mimesis* can “accommodate itself to political [or philosophical] systems that are different, even opposed to one another” (EC, 4). This in turn

allows for the transportation of what Derrida says regarding Kant's use of *mimesis* into the context of Hegel.

Kantian Mimesis

In his discussion of fine art, Kant says that art is not nature, and that the distinctions between art and nature, *tekhne* and *physis*, freedom and necessity, hold true (EC, 4). Moreover, art must not imitate nature. Imitation, for Kant, is 'aping;' even the ape knows how to mime or copy (EC, 9). But at the very moment that Kant seems to detach *mimesis* from the question of art, "a certain *quasi*, a certain *als ob* re-establishes analogical *mimesis*" (EC, 4). For true *mimesis* involves the relations of subjectivities – to themselves (as other) – and to other subjectivities. *Mimesis proper* is not the imitation of a natural thing by a produced thing, nor is it the imitation of objects or products, nor the relation between two produced things. First and foremost, *mimesis* is the relation between two producing subjects. As such, while the work of art should not be a copy of nature, should not re-produce nature *as such*, the *production* of art does imitate the *act of production* that produces nature. This therefore suggests that God is engaged with productivity, that he has in some way produced himself and has produced nature in an act of original productivity. This is "the fold of *mimesis* at the origin of pure productivity, a sort of gift for itself of God who makes a present to himself of himself, even prior to the re-productive or imitative structure" (EC, 13).

An analogy between the two forms of production thus intervenes: for example, to think that nature is Gods' work, a product and hence the result of an act of production, to think that genuine production were possible only by a subjectivity, here a divine subjectivity, is to begin to see the link between divine productivity and human productivity. In recognising this 'original' or primary *mimesis*, in viewing nature as the product of a subjectivity, and hence of a freedom, the bond between art and *mimesis* is restored. Not only is God's self-relation

mimetic (primary *mimesis*), but as soon as production and the product are linked back and forth in this way, then this relation becomes repeated and repeatable in other contexts. The origin, spirit or God, relates to itself by means of production, by a division or doubling that allows it to appear to itself as an object. And it is this relation of the original and infinite subjectivity to itself, this *mimesis*, that is repeated in the relation of a finite subjectivity to his own productions, such as the fine arts. Primary *mimesis* is God's self-relation; it is one of productivity. Man imitates this *mimesis* in his own productivity. Thus man imitates productive *mimesis* in his own productive *mimesis*. Henceforth, the analogy between these two forms of production annuls the opposition of nature and artefact, *physis* and *tekhne*: both are the result of the *same process* of production. The difference lays only in where the process of production takes place in the analogical chain.

Pure and free productivity must resemble that of nature. And it does so precisely because, free and pure, it does not depend on natural laws. The less it depends on nature, the more it resembles nature. *Mimesis* here is not the representation of thing by another, the relation of resemblance or of identification between two beings, the reproduction of a product of nature by a product of art. It is not a relation of two products but of two productions. And of two freedoms. The artist does not imitate things in nature, or, if you will, in *natura naturata*, but the acts of *natura naturans*, the operations of the *physis*. But since an analogy has already made *natura naturans* the art of an author-subject, and, one could even say, of an artist-god, *mimesis* displays the identification of human action with divine action – of one freedom with another (EC, 4).

The concept of production is thus directly related to the concept of *mimesis* in (at least) two ways.² Firstly, the way in which the origin relates to itself is mimetic. God doubles, divides and mirrors himself through a process of 'strict' *mimesis*. And secondly, since this process belongs to a free subjectivity, it will repeat itself in other free subjectivities, especially since these other free subjectivities (mankind) are themselves the products of divine subjectivity. *Mimesis* thus names the original relation of God to himself (or to his products), and the

² Derrida asks in 'Economimesis' whether the concept of production is not in fact "marked" "everywhere and *in general*" by *mimesis*? (EC, 13).

relation of man to himself, *and* mimesis also names the relation of these two producing freedoms to one another. As such, man imitates God's acts of imitation, human *mimesis* imitates divine *mimesis*. Crucially then, the concept of *mimesis* opens an economy; the players may change, but they share a common fund or source (the infinite itself, God) and they repeat the same actions. For Kant then, art is beautiful to the extent that it is productive like productive nature, that it produces the production and not the product of nature (EC, 10). The form and value of the product is therefore inseparable from the process of its constitution or production. And consequently, the product must always, in some way, bear the trace or history of its production.³ The implications of this are far reaching and will be discussed throughout this chapter.

True *mimesis* is not the imitation of one thing by another, but the relation of free subjectivities to themselves as/and to the other. And since divine productivity is necessarily and essentially at the top of this pyramid, God sets the prime example of this structure of production. The concept of *mimesis* thus organises a hierarchy in which the form and the value of the product is determined by the degree to which its production resembles that of divine production, and by its proximity to this divine productivity. A hierarchical and analogical chain is thus instituted, in which analogy/*mimesis* is both the structure of the relation *and* the ultimate term of that relation (EC, 17). Now on the one hand, this chain serves what might be called a didactic purpose. It passes knowledge along, is, for example, the way that reason reaches or is handed down to man. Nature allows man to 'read' and to know God by passing knowledge along in the form of examples. For since God learns (about) himself by example so man too learns by example: "the passage of *mimesis* cannot proceed by concepts but only – between freedoms – by exemplars with reflective value,

³ This opens up a problematic which I want simply to note here, that of how to judge the value of the product if there can be no surety regarding the means of its production.

quasi-natural productions which will institute the non-conceptual rules of art ” (EC, 10). These examples thus serve a didactic purpose, benefiting not only God’s self-knowledge, but also man’s knowledge of the origin and hence his self-knowledge (since man is a product of divine production). The outside of God, his negative reflections, are the means by which knowledge is delivered to man. (And once again, since philosophers disagree about man’s role in this delivery, about whether man can attain objective knowledge independent of his subjectivity for example, so the ‘methods’ of philosophy will be changed accordingly.)

By passing knowledge along in this way, and thereby revealing how knowledge is produced, the mimetic relation begins to dictate how man should produce his own productions. For if human production ought to imitate divine production, then it follows that divine production is in a position to state what form this production should take. Divine production thus has a prescriptive role; it articulates norms of productivity, and the normativity of relations between subjects and between the sensible and the intelligible (norms of representation). Nature gives the rules to the art of genius. “Not concepts, not descriptive laws, but rules precisely, singular norms which are also orders, imperative statements ” (EC, 13). Nature thus functions as a discourse; it gives order (prescribes) and it does so through the signifying element. For Derrida, this means that every time the *Third Critique* calls upon that which appears to be a discursive metaphor (such as Nature ‘says’ or ‘dictates’), these are not just any metaphors but the analogies of analogy, “whose message is that the literal meaning is analogical: nature is properly *logos* towards which one always must return. Analogy is always language.” (EC, 13). Analogy is the rule, nature announces to man by “signs and traces” (EC, 15). The purposeless-ness of the beautiful, rather than threaten ‘meaning’ then, actually confirms it: “Beautiful forms, which signify nothing and have no determined purpose are therefore *also, and by that very fact*, encrypted signs, a figural writing set down in nature’s production ” (EC, 15).

Through this relation of analogy, man repeats the work of God, philosophy imitates God's self relation in its own self-relation and relations to its outside. Philosophy imitates a more natural and more authoritative, since more original, economy, God's own economy of relations, the exemplary ideal of examples. And this original economy then serves to legitimate each subsequent economy. As such, the relations of *mimesis* move back and forth along the chain. God or spirit uses "human play to reappropriate the gift for itself" (EC, 11).⁴ Just as the truth always needs what it subordinates to itself so God needs his productions, of which man is one. And at the same time, man receives (from above) what he gives, but in this he receives not only the given, but the power to give, the power of productivity itself, as transmitted through the given.

As such, on the one hand, the rules or norms are prescribed, handed down, revealed, dictated. On the other, since man is a natural product of God, it is fitting and natural that man will share the same relation to his productions as God does to his own. That is, man will behave in this way naturally, freely, since this is the natural action of *what is*, and man is a part of *what is*. *Mimesis*, understood not as copying but in this more genuine sense of imitation, thus always relates itself to freedom: only a freedom can imitate in this way since imitation constitutes the relation of freedom to itself:

⁴ The problematic of *mimesis* can thus be related to questions regarding the possibilities of inventing and of saying the new. According to this structure, saying the new is impossible since everything has always already been said, even that which is yet to come. This is why Derrida says that, in a certain way, deconstruction is impossible ('Pysche: Inventions of the Other,' trans. Catherine Porter, in *Reading de Man Reading*, ed.s Lindsay Waters & Wlad Godzich, 1989, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 36). In this essay Derrida suggests that invention is often conceptualised as manifestation or unveiling, a showing that is finite in reality but infinite in ideality, and thus able to be infinitely repeated as the same. In this case, an invention of the new is merely a reflection of the same, offered up as a mirror for God (Waters & Godzich, 1989, 58).

Do we know what freedom is, what *freedom* means, before having conceived of physis as mimesis? Before the fold God gives himself in a miroir? How can man's freedom resemble God's freedom which resembles itself and reassembles itself in it? It resembles it by precisely not imitating it, the only way in which one freedom can resemble another (EC, 10).

Hegel and Mimesis

Despite the differences between Kant and Hegel, I want to focus here on what Derrida's reading of Kantian *mimesis* can teach of Hegel's relation to *mimesis*. Now, while Hegel does not describe the relation of spirit to itself as mimetic, he does say that spirit's self-relation is the same as the father-son relation. To be more precise, it is the same as the relation between God and Christ, which sets the normative concept of familiarity. The family moment declares that spirit gives itself products in the same way as God fathers a son, and that these products have the same value to spirit as Christ has to his father. It declares this by giving itself as a metaphor for a relation that is itself metaphoric. In other words, the father-son relation is a metaphor for the relation between God and his metaphor, Christ. In this 'original' metaphoric relation, the metaphor is the son who acts as a representation, a detached object that has been produced by spirit (the father) in which the spirit can recognise itself as object for self. This moment when spirit forces itself into the constraints of an opposition, this tightening or spatial contraction, gives form to what is, essentially, beyond form. And it is this giving-of-form, this production of an opposite or metaphor through which spirit can reflect itself back to itself, that I believe is mimetic.

I have examined the *mimesis* that Derrida identifies in the work of Kant. It is a relation of original productivity, in which God "makes a present to himself of himself" (EC, 13). Derrida identifies a similar productivity at work in Platonism. Here too,

before it can be translated as imitation, *mimesis* signifies the presentation of the thing itself, of nature, of the physis that produces itself, engenders itself, and appears (to itself) as it really is, in the presence of its image, its visible aspect, its face [...]

Mimesis is then the movement of the physis, a movement that is somehow natural (in the nonderivative sense of this word), through which the physis, having no outside, no other, must be doubled in order to make its appearance, to appear (to itself), to produce (itself), to unveil (itself); in order to emerge from the crypt where it prefers itself; in order to shine in its *aletheia* (D, 193).

It is here that I believe the connection between *mimesis* and Hegelian productivity can be marked out. For is not this movement of production, engenderment and appearance the very movement of spirit giving itself form? Is it not the movement of spirit, the father, God, as it divides into opposition, gives itself an outside, a face, such that it can know itself? As I noted in Chapter One, Hegel says that spirit's proper work is "to produce itself, to make itself its own object" such that spirit becomes "its own product" (Hegel quoted in G, 24a). This productivity is the movement by which spirit produces a product which can represent it. It is the production of an outside, a division which is also an addition, a doubling, a repetition. This is spirit's relation to itself, or what Derrida calls in 'Economimesis' "a flexion of the *physis*, nature's relation to itself" (EC, 4). It is mimetic, in the sense of a primary *mimesis*.

This productivity or 'flexion' constitutes the movement of dialectics, of the *Aufhebung*. It is the movement of spirit's division into thesis, antithesis and synthesis, the division of spirit into father and son. *Mimesis* underpins for this division, allowing for spirit to recognise itself through the production of an opposing other which is, crucially, still itself. In 'White Mythology' Derrida says that "*Physis* is revealed in *mimesis* [...] by virtue of the hardly apparent structure which constrains *mimesis* from carrying to the exterior the fold of its redoubling. It belongs to *physis*, or if you will, *physis* includes its own exteriority and its double" (M, 237). *Mimesis* allows for what is only an inside (in the case of Hegel, the self-identical interiority of spirit) to give itself an outside which can represent it. What is thereby revealed is the double, the outside. Thus in the Last Supper the son, Christ, is revealed as the son of God who represents and reveals God. This much has been established. But what has

been difficult to pin down so far is what allows for this outside to be produced by and represent the inside, this “hardly apparent structure” that is the “fold of its redoubling.” This is the movement of the *Aufhebung* which has proved so resistant to the understanding and which has thus called upon the supplementary assistance of the metaphor. The family metaphor explains the relations of the *Aufhebung*. But what I want to suggest here is that what the family metaphor actually *says*, what the family *means*, is that the *Aufhebung* is a relation of *mimesis*, a relation of being-between which allows for one thing to produce another, to repeat itself in another and to see itself reflected in that other. In this way, *mimesis*, under the guise of the family, explains spirit’s “enigmatic division” (M, 239).

Hegelian Paternity

What is in question here then, is what the family really means for Hegel, what allows the family to have the metaphoric potency it has. For as Derrida asks in Plato’s Pharmacy (*Dissemination*), “what is a father?” (D, 80). As the previous two chapter have indicated, this question is not as simple as it first appears. For the father is the *what is*, he *is* what has needed metaphoricity to explain himself, to manifest himself and know himself. So that while, on the one hand, the term ‘father’ has a certain familiarity and one thinks one knows what the term ‘father’ means, on the other hand, this term is being called upon to carry more than a simple relation of biological productivity and procreation. Or perhaps better, it is being called upon to carry these relations *because* there is nothing simple about them, because there is *more* to them. For paternity and filiation say more than simple production or procreation; they carry within them a sense of continuity, of the maintenance of a connection between father and son, one that is produced because of the precise way in which the father produces a son. It is the complexity of this relation that the Last Supper scene takes so much trouble to articulate. And it is here that the connection between the family metaphor and *mimesis* asserts itself. For what makes the father-son relation more than biological is what

permits a circularity of relations, for the son to be a product of, a repetition of, and to return to, the father. That is *mimesis*. And as such, the father-son relation articulates *mimesis*, because *mimesis* is a condition for the father-son relation.

In order to try to understand this, the way in which Hegel thinks about the production of a son, and the value of that son, must be thought through. Engenderment allows for the fold of *mimesis* to be grasped; it presents folding itself as the relation between a father and his son, as a relation of filiation. This relation of filiation is a relation of production and recognition. Since production is the 'essential activity of spirit' it is the work of the father. This is the *mimesis* that Derrida recognises to be at work in Kant's Critique: "the productive freedom of God who identifies himself in himself, at the origin of the origin, with the production of production" (EC, 13). For paternity means production, productivity itself. In Hegel's dialectic this productivity occurs when the father divides into opposition and through this division adds something to himself. This addition is twofold: what the father produces is the son *and* the relation between himself and the son. In other words, he produces production itself (addition, doubling, division, opposition, mediation, recognition) plus what is being added (the son, the opposite, the double). What must be thought through then, is what it means *to produce a son*.

For Hegel, what is valuable about the father and son relation is what it makes explicit; it manifests the relation between father and son *as* a relation of manifestation, a relation in which the nonsensory (spirit) gives itself a sensory form, 'a face' and visible aspect. The son

gives to God his image. But as this son of God is man – he is God separated from himself and appearing to himself as the passage from the infinite to the finite, from the finite to the infinite. God knows and recognizes himself in his son. [...] The knowledge relation that organizes this whole scene is a third, a third term, the element of the infinite's relation to self: it is the holy spirit. This medium obtains the

element of *familiarity*: God's familiarity with his very own seed, the element of God's play with himself (G, 31a).

Spirit is the term of the relation, the unity of the whole thought in parts. Spirit, as this unity, is familiarity, the filiation that allows the son to represent the father. The father produces production, the possibility of dividing and doubling himself, of repeating himself in the form of a son. This productivity is procreation, engenderment, the issuing forth of offspring. What these terms *mean* is repetition, the repetition of presence. For what Hegel adds to Kantian *mimesis* is presence: the father *is present* in the son because he repeats himself in the son, because he gives of himself a part of himself in the form of a son. As Derrida says, "*Geist* is always, in the very production of its essence, a kind of repetition" (G, 20a). Paternity declares that the father is the origin of the son, the source which produces a repetition which contains him *and* can act as his outside. That is what allows Hegel to say that the father *is* the son. The mimetic relation here is one of a repetition of presence through engenderment.

What engenderment tells of *mimesis* is crucial. For what makes the father/son relation special comes from what it means *to produce a son*, an object that is capable of signifying the relation of same and other. For the son remembers what has produced him, says that he has a father. More than any other relation the son announces that he is a product of production; he announces or signifies that he is an offspring, that he has been engendered, is in a relation of filiation with the father, that he continues the family line. And that is because something of the father produced the son and remains in the son. Spirit has produced this son, has engendered it, given birth to it, produced it. So that "spirit is the element of the *Aufhebung* in which the seed returns to the father" (G, 31a). This is where Hegelian marks a leap from Kantianism then. The father/son relation declares that the son is not something other than the father. He still *is* the father, but the father externalised, exposed, revealed. This being the-

same-and-other is what is important, for it determines the function and the value of the son. Only what has been produced by the father can represent the father. This is not representation in any simple sense, for the representation *is* the father. Spirit *is* the totality. Spirit does not constrict itself into any other but into *its* other, what it opposes to itself. Which *is* still spirit or the father, since what it produces to oppose to itself *is* still itself. The father and son are thus the same, and different, opposed. The son *is* the father, *and* different from the father: “The *mimeme* is neither the thing itself nor something totally other. Nothing will upset the law [...] of the same and of difference ” (M, 239-40, f.n.43).

As such, the son *is* the father *and* an outside, a copy, an externality. He is valuable to the extent that he is a product of the father, that the father is his origin and repeats himself in him. The same applies to all oppositions; what makes matter, the sensible, the signifier and the metaphor valuable is the spirit that is repeated there, that is carried, constrained and chained up within these ‘outsides.’ But what the son adds to this is crucial. For unlike other moments in which spirit departs from itself, the son declares that he still *is* his father. This is why the Last Supper is given a special place in the system. It acts as a model because it is the most exemplary relation, the relation that declares that relations are paternal. Spirit not only fathers a son; it is also the father of metaphor, of signification, of matter. The relation remains the same for all of spirit’s departures. But what gives the father-son relation its potency is that it articulates this relation, making explicit the way in which this structure of productivity and representation actually functions.

As such, while the father assigns value, the function of the son ought not be overlooked. The father becomes a father only by producing a son. Again there is the twisting of temporality. Spirit becomes truly itself only through mediation and opposition. Fatherhood is itself produced through reproduction, through the production of a representation. What has been

shown to be important in this structure is the value Hegel assigns to the *link* between production and representation. Spirit or the father is only itself, only becomes itself, through the production of opposition or the son. That is, through the production of what can represent it. For spirit *is* its own activity, *is* its own result. So on the one hand, it is the father or spirit that carries the force of the operation. This marries up to the desire of the philosopher: for Hegel, spirit, *what is*, is all. But Hegel also acknowledges that spirit would be nothing without mediation, recognition, opposition. That is, spirit would be nothing without relations, repetition, representation and so on. The father needs the son. So that while Hegel's system is dependent upon the father, the father is himself dependent upon his relations. The *is* that unites father and son determines the value of the relation, and the value of the parts within that relation. But this *is* is not present. It exists only *between* terms. Therefore it too must be represented. The son not only represents the father but represents the relation between the father and his product. The son says: 'I am my father, I have been produced by my father, I have a continuing relation to my father, and I will return to my father.' That is what gives the family metaphor its potency.

The relation of the *is* must be maintained in order that the relation is one of production, belonging, representation. The relation 'the father *is* the son' declares the maintenance of their connection, says that there is unity even in separation. And it is this maintenance of this link, of this *between*, that is absolutely vital. A son is only a son with reference to the father. He is at once different to, and to a degree independent of, the father, yet he can exist only to the extent that this independence is coupled with dependence. This play of attachment and detachment, a kind of *fort da* between father and son, is made possible by strict *mimesis*. In turn it makes possible all of spirit's representations, including the staging of the Last Supper itself.

Attachment and Detachment: Filiation

Unlike biological growth, the son remains attached to the father even in his autonomy. He is a son because of the infinite presence of his father. The relation at stake is thus a relation between two presences; between the son as a presence present in the present (but which as the 'here and now' is not a form of absolute presence), and the father as an invisible presence that is absent in the 'here and now' (but present in the nonspatial and eternal presence, in true, absolute, self-presence). This same and other allows for representation on "the condition of giving us to see in action that which nonetheless is not to be seen in action, but only in its resembling double, its *mimema*" (M, 239). Resemblance here is not one of likeness (the father, having no externality of his own, can be the object of no likeness). Rather, it is made possible by the link of filiation which attaches father to son. What this relation produces and articulates then is relation-ness, the relations between the intelligible/sensible, presence/absence, inside/outside, invisibility/visibility. It teaches that the form that has been detached, the representation or the son, is only valuable to the extent that its relation to its origin can be traced, that the link in some way remains, that it can be posited, even in its absence. It also teaches that without such a link, the father would not be recognised and so would himself be weakened. Thus filiation, paternity, the *is*, is a relation of productivity and representation, in which what is crucial for both parties is the maintenance of that relation. This is the meaning of the *Aufhebung*.

Now in order for this link to be maintained, what must be understood is the way in which spirit gives itself a product or son. For it is not so much a matter of division as a process of folding. Spirit folds itself in two, this fold itself being as important as the two sides of opposition it has produced. For the fold enables the two parts to remain attached. The relation between father and son, the process by which the father produces and detaches a representation, the *is* that unites and separates, is the production of the *between* of a fold.

This is what it produces first and foremost: productivity itself. And of course, opposition, the two opposing sides of what is, essentially, the *same*. In the Last Supper scene, this folding takes the form of the opposition *between* father and son. Opposition is a relation *between*. It is a relation of recognition, mediation, constriction. And it is produced by what I called earlier primary *mimesis*. It is a relation through which spirit recognises itself through division, through production into a different same which it declares is *its* other. Here again “[w]e have recognized the fold of *mimesis* at the origin of pure productivity, a sort of gift for-itself of God who makes a present for himself to himself, even prior to the re-productive or imitative structure” (EC, 13).

This economy of the fold is made possible by the concept of *mimesis*. *Mimesis* allows for this relation of belonging; it allows for the (body of the) son to belong to the (spirit of the) father; for the example to belong to the model and thus to the set; for the repetition to belong to the original; for the external necessity to belong to the internal necessity. It is an economy that bases itself on proprietorship, on ownership. The origin *owns* its repetitions since without it they are nothing, they don’t exist. Matter can never exist without spirit. The son can never exist without the father. As such, *mimesis* describes a relationship of belonging, of division as/and addition, of productivity. It implants this relationship at the very root of the origin, in the spirit’s or the father’s self-relation, making auto-affection the very action of the origin, of *what is*.⁵ Spirit poses and divides itself in the question ‘*What is?*’. It gives itself in(to) the question. Its response, that ‘the *is* is *what is*,’ that the father *is* the son and the son *is* the father, always serves as a reappropriation, guaranteed by the unity of the *is*. *Mimesis* is a condition of possibility for the *is*, for the between as the relation between unity and division.

⁵ “Auto-affection is a pure speculation” (OG, 154).

Plato, Hegel and Mimesis

In order to confirm this connection between Hegel, filiation and *mimesis*, I want now to examine what Derrida says regarding Plato, filiation and *mimesis*. Now, there is not sufficient space here to do justice to Derrida's work on Plato and *mimesis* in 'Plato's Pharmacy.' But I do want to give a sense of how Derrida's writing in that essay focuses in on the family relation as a metaphor for mimetic relations, and from that, to give more evidence for my belief that the same can be said of Hegel's recourse to the family metaphor.

In 'Plato's Pharmacy' (and briefly in 'The Double Session,' again in *Dissemination*) Derrida shows how Plato calls upon the paternal metaphor to explain relations of productivity and representation. The difference is that in this essay the connection is also explicitly made to *mimesis*. Once again it is a matter of filiation, of a connection to the origin that determines value. For the value of the mimetic product or the son depends upon what has issued it, its father, and upon its continuing relation to this father or origin. The product 'borrows' its value from its origin, from what has produced it, leading Derrida to say that "*mimesis* has to follow the process of truth. The presence of the present, its norm, its order, its law. It is in the name of truth, its only reference – *reference* itself – that *mimesis* is judged" (D, 193). This truth(fulness), the validity of the reference, can only be ascertained by the *connection* between the truth and that of which it is the truth. Here again then, *mimesis* is still not a matter of resemblance but of productivity. And it is not a question of resemblance because here too, just as with Hegelian spirit, the origin (*what is* or the *eidos*) is characterised by its absence. This leads Plato to call not only upon the metaphor of the father, but also to think this father through his son. For the father is not present in the here and now but in an infinite presence, and as Derrida points out, it is very precisely this absence of the father that gives rise to philosophy and dialectics.

The absolute invisibility of the origin of the visible, of the good-sun-father-capital [...] gives rise to a structure of replacements such that all presences will be supplements substituted for the absent origin (D, 167).

The son is a substitute, a replacement, and a repetition. Philosophy too is a substitute and repetition. This circulation of metaphors, the 'good-sun-father-capital,' thus leads to a circulation of complementary metaphors, the sensible sun as the complement of the intelligible sun, the son as the complement of the father, the return on the investment as the complement of the capital invested. As Socrates says, man must give up the attempt to speak of the good in itself and instead replace it with its son or offspring. This applies not only to the activity of the good in itself, which issues its own metaphors, but to the activity of man, who imitates this natural metaphors in his own metaphoricity. Through this movement, mankind edges closer to the source of all production. As such, man is unable to speak directly of the (his) father, this "origin and value of appearing beings." Unable to stare directly at the sun, man returns to the cave, to the mirror images and the play of shadows. The intelligible sun must be replaced by the sensible sun, by its *analogon*.

The Good, in the visible-invisible figure of the father, the sun, or capital, is the origin of all *onta*, responsible for their appearing and their coming into *logos*, which both assembles and distinguishes them. [...] The good is thus the hidden illuminating, blinding source of *logos*. And since one cannot speak of that which enables one to speak (being forbidden to speak of it or to speak to it face to face), one will speak only of that which speaks and of things that, with a single exception, one is constantly speaking of (D, 83).

The line of filiation thus extends back towards the infinite father. And at each step or stop of this analogy, analogy itself speaks. In *Glas*, Derrida notes how Hegel too calls on this solar tradition. As I have shown, in the Last Supper scene, God's infinite revelation reveals itself in its infinity. It is the revelation *of* revelation, "the un-veiling as the un-veiling of the veil itself" (G, 212a). Infinite truth's movement of manifestation merges with the history of spirit. Christianity, as the religion of truth, offers up the structure by which man is to

interpret the progressive revelation and reappropriation of the divine absolute. What it reveals then, is the structure of revelation itself.

The absolute presence (*Dasein*) is knowledge, has itself and knows itself as absolute substance that manifests itself to itself, determines itself. God's being is absolutely present, manifest, *there* (*da*). God is the very act of self-manifesting, of being *there*. The there, the *Da* does not supervene on him; God is *Da*, the manifest(ing) of the manifestation (G, 212-13a).

This father, like the Good, is not present in the here and now. But his goodness is represented through the production of representation. As such, the father "is good (*agathos*) inasmuch as he gives rise to *genesis*, as he causes coming to birth, to the light of day, accords birth and form " (G, 214a).

The tradition called on – here – by Hegel is a solar and diurnal tradition, the tradition of the *agathon*, of the good god that engenders, that gives form and visibility. The unity of the values of life and truth, the unveiling to sight. Goodness, the absence of jealousy, does not consist only in giving birth, in producing life, but also in giving itself to be seen, in producing itself. The value of jealousy permits merging a problematics of life and a problematics of truth as productivity (G, 214a).

For Hegel, the Christian God, unlike his Jewish counterpart, is good and generous. The Jews believe in an envious, jealous God who hides himself, keeps himself in the beyond. In contrast, the father-figure of the Christian God does not hide; as a father he produces and gives his form to a son. Non-jealousy ties together the attributes of paternity. The jealous God attempts to keep himself from sight, is the figure of the father who does not want that to which he gives birth to resemble him. Derrida refers this schema back to Plato's 'Timaeus' (G, 213a) in which nonjealousy in the father/son or generator/engendered relation is determined as the desire for resemblance. Now, in order to resemble God, one must know him and think him, see himself reveal himself here, *da*. A father cannot hide himself, being-generative excludes envy. He *is* good inasmuch as he gives rise to *genesis*, gives birth and

form. The unity of these values of life and truth, of truth as unveiling and life as productivity, finds itself thought out through the Last Supper.

Derrida thus identifies a line of continuity running between Plato and Hegel, for “it is still a matter of imitating (expressing, describing, representing, illustrating) an *eidos* or *idea*, whether it be the figure of the thing itself, as in Plato, a subjective representation, as in Descartes, or both, as in Hegel ” (D, 194). For both Plato and Hegel the paternal metaphor is not simply one of biological productivity. As Derrida says, “the father is not the generator or procreator in any ‘real’ sense prior to or outside all relation to language. In what way, indeed, is the father/son relation distinguishable from mere cause /effect or generator/engendered relation, if not by the instance of logos?” (D, 80). What intervenes in the relation between father and son in order to make it *more* is the possibility of a discourse issued from and ‘about’ *what is*, a discourse that is repeated in man’s own discourse and in his use of discursive metaphors. *What is* speaks to man. And it follows that the best way for it to do this is through the *logos*, through the reason and word of the father: “*Logos represents* what it is indebted to: the father who is also chief, capital, and good(s) ” (D, 81). It is no surprise then, that *logos* thinks it knows and hears itself better in speech, in the mode of language *whose mimetic aspects permit it to think it can best mirror the truth*.

Speech and Writing

In Derrida’s essay ‘Plato’s Pharmacy’ his exploration of the paternal metaphor is also an exploration of the opposition between speech and writing. Now, I do not intend to pursue Derrida’s reading of this relation between *mimesis*, speech and writing in Hegel (although the connection is there). But this relation between speech and writing does reflect what is

important in the father/son relation. For the son, like speech, is a good form of *mimesis*.⁶

And this is because, once again, he remembers what has produced him.

According to Plato, the Good is the father of *logos*, of truth, reason, the word; or in other words, the origin of *logos* is its father. Since it is a question of truth and of proximity, the best representative of the *logos* will be the one that most closely resembles the production and form of this divine *logos*, and the one that most maintains these relations to this origin. *Logos* is itself already representative; it is the Good's word to himself, his discourse of himself to himself. Plato determines that the best way of continuing this relation down the chain of analogy is through speech, since it is in speech that the discourse maintains its relationship with its producer: "one could say anachronously that the 'speaking subject' is the father of his speech. [...] *Logos* is a son, then, a son that would be destroyed in his very *presence* without the present *attendance* of his father. His father who answers." (D, 77). *Logos* the son offers the father self-reflection. And since speech claims to maintain its dependence upon its father, to be nothing without that father, it is again a relation of recognition. This *logos* is alive in that he has a living father. It will cease at the moment the father dies. Speech alleges to forbid itself patricide, maintains the relation of recognition, acknowledges its origins, both legally and morally:

Living *logos* is alive in that it has a living father [...], a father that is *present, standing* near it, within it, sustaining it with his rectitude, attending it in person and in his own name. Living *logos*, for its part, recognizes its debt, lives off that recognition, and forbids itself, thinks it can forbid itself patricide (D, 77).

⁶ Plato elaborates an entire schema, which is not always free of contradiction, by which the value of the act of *mimesis*, and of the result of this act, the mimetic product, is to be judged. Derrida describes this schema as "a kind of logical machine" (D, 193), adding that "according to a complex but implacable law, this machine deals out all the clichés of criticism to come" (D, 186-87, fn.14). For a fuller reading of this structure, see in particular D, 184-199.

The father not only engenders speech, but keeps it alive in the same moment. Spoken words are “alive enough to protest on occasion and to let themselves be questioned; capable of [...] responding when their father is there ” (D, 78). Within the category of the *zoon* (the living), two further qualifications are required: on the one hand, the discourse must be “well born, of noble blood ” (D, 80). A good discourse will speak of the Good, since the Good is the true condition of possibility for speech. The Good is the father. And on the other hand, the *logos* must itself behave with propriety, one ought to speak well of the Good. So discourse “ought to submit to the laws of life,” resemble an “*organism*: [have] a differentiated body *proper*, with a centre and extremities, joints, a head, and feet ” (D, 79). Speech knows that it ought to have a beginning, a middle and an end. One can’t simply dip into speech, the way that one could open a book on any page, wherever its ‘author’ may be.

Speech is better than writing then because it maintains and remembers its relations with its origin. There is less distance between it and the thought that it is said to transcribe, *and it resembles* the production of truth at the origin. The same pattern repeats itself in Kant, where speech is determined as good because of its “authenticity, its sincerity and its loyalty, its faithful adequation to itself, to its interior content” (EC, 18). Speech or poetry “more and better, presents – the plenitude of thought. It binds presentation (on the side of expression) to a fullness of thought. It better ‘binds’ the presenting to the presented in its plenitude. Poetry, more and better, presents the fullness, the fullness of conceptual thought or the fullness of the idea, insofar as it frees us from the limits of external sensible nature ” (EC, 18). It transforms hetero-affection into auto-affection (EC, 18), says and hears itself in one and the same moment, offers the least distance to be crossed between imitator and imitated. No exterior means is necessary, nothing exterior poses an obstacle, communication here is closer to freedom and spontaneity. As such, between the concept or idea and the system of hearing-oneself-speak, between the intelligible and speech, the link is privileged. There is still no

direct access to the *logos* in-itself, but speech offers the closest resemblance to the idealising interiority of God's word to himself.

Now one might say that, following this Platonic analogy, in the case of Hegel the son is God's speech to himself. For in the son, there is no distance, no spacing, to be overcome. The father *is* present in the son, he remains in the son. As such, father and son are united by *logos*, by the order of order. Christ is God's discourse to himself. Procreation is language, the name, the declaration of a relation. The *logos* declares their bond. So that for Derrida,

What Hegel translates by relation, relationship, is the name. What man discovers more proper within himself, in his own proper name, in his most appropriating relation, is God and God as his father. The name, the relation, the spirit [...] is the structure of what returns to the father (G, 79a).

Hegel's discourse on vision, on the detour through the sensible with a view to final reappropriation is co-ordinated with the "invisible ideality of a *logos* which hears-itself-speak" (M, 73). This in turn articulates a discourse of proximity. The son offers the least resistance to the father, the least difference to the father. In this way the theoretical perception of resemblance is restored. The son is what most closely resembles the father because he remains the most closely affiliated to his father. This is what allows the father/son relation to act as a model and exemplar for relations in the system in general. And as the Last Supper shows, Jesus is more than simply present. He adds more to the scene by adding a declaration. He speaks the truth, declares unity. His presence is combined with the annunciation that declares 'the father *is* the son.' The truth is present in Christ as he speaks. The son says that the father is alive in him, that this 'life' allows for the whole to be thought in parts, in, precisely, the proposition: 'the father *is* the son.'

Hegel, Metaphor and Mimesis

If confirmation were still needed that the father/son relation is mimetic it can be found in Derrida's reading of metaphor. As Chapter Two demonstrated, for Derrida the way in which spirit departs and returns to itself, in other words, the movement of the *Aufhebung*, is structured like a metaphor. Or vice versa, the movement of metaphorisation is an idealisation, an *Aufhebung*. This is the infinite unity of spirit thinking itself through (sensory) parts. This analogy with metaphor (which, it has been shown, extends its reach beyond mere analogy) is telling because Derrida says in 'White Mythology' that metaphor itself is structured by *mimesis*.

On the one hand, the concept of metaphor is dependent upon the concept of primary *mimesis*, or *mimesis*-as-productivity. Spirit produces itself through metaphor, or to put in another way, the 'father' produces a 'son' who can act as a metaphor for him and can represent him. But metaphor also restores the connection between *mimesis* and resemblance or *homoiosis*. In this way, it allows for thinking that the son in some way resembles the father. As I have already shown, the father and son cannot resemble one another since the father has no externality that could be repeated or imitated. Nonetheless, the possibility of resemblance is restored through the *theoretical perception* of resemblance. And this theoretical resemblance is made possible by the fact that the father and son, whilst being different, are also the same. This inner resemblance permits thinking an outer resemblance. Indeed, this is precisely the job of metaphor, to make a connection between that which is nonsensory and that which is sensory. In other words, metaphor gives a sensory expression to the nonsensory. Here this takes on more cogency since what is expressing the nonsensory is still the same as the nonsensory; the father is the son. As such there is an 'inner' resemblance and this, as Derrida says, "is the condition for metaphor. *Homoiosis* is not only constitutive of the value of truth

(*aletheia*) which governs the entire chain; it is that without which the metaphorical operation is impossible”(M, 237).

As such, “[l]ike *mimesis*, metaphor *comes back* to *physis*, to its truth and its presence. There, [spirit] always refinds its own, proper analogy, its own resemblance to itself, takes increase only from itself. [Spirit] gives itself in metaphor” (M, 244). That which permits metaphor to give a sensory expression of the nonsensory is *mimesis*. It permits metaphoricity as substitution, expression, and representation, the giving of an ‘outside’ to an ‘inside.’ The metaphor of the family says that the son is a metaphor, a sensory expression, of the father. And as has been shown, this paternal metaphor does not simply add itself to Hegel’s text. Spirit knows and thinks itself in metaphors, in the examples it gives of itself. And it does so according to the structure of relief, of expropriation and reappropriation, in other words, according to the structure of metaphor. This structure, this metaphor of life and of life as metaphoricity, is made possible by *mimesis* and describes this *mimesis*.

This natural movement of spirit as it gives (itself though) metaphor is repeated and imitated in man’s use of metaphor. This is the “rational *mimesis*” (G, 95a) between divine productivity and human productivity. For man imitates spirit’s natural movement. It is right then, that man too should produce metaphors. For spirit “reassembles itself, knows itself, appears to itself, reflects itself, and ‘mimics’ itself par excellence and *in truth* in human nature. *Mimesis* is proper to man” (M, 237). Hegel’s poetics of the heliotrope (the analogies between father and son, between the intelligible sun and the sensible sun)⁷ which equate seeing and knowing thus take on the semblance of a naturality and neutrality. It is natural to

⁷ The ‘circle of the heliotrope’ is Derrida’s name for the chain of metaphors which gravitate around the metaphor of the sun and which serve to endorse the link between sight and knowledge (M, 49 onwards, and EC, 12).

man that he, like spirit, will depend on metaphor. The ocular metaphors describe and indeed prescribe a unity between seeing and knowing that is itself made possible by *mimesis* and serve at the same time to legitimate the detour that *mimesis* prescribes. On condition that, just as spirit's metaphors relieve themselves in the face of truth, so the discourse of man should behave with propriety. The preface, introduction, metaphors, representations: all ought to be relieved back into the totality of the encyclopedia.

Derrida's reading articulates the relation between sight and knowledge. And again, like all other detours, sight is permissible only on condition of its relief. In this way, sight itself begins to take on a certain metaphoric capacity. The hypothesis of the gaze, which Derrida elaborates in *Memoirs of the Blind* here has a certain pertinence.⁸ The equation of sight and knowledge establishes itself in Plato's cave, where man learns by imitation. It is found in the work of Aristotle, where imitation belongs to the process of education and thus belongs properly to man (M, 237). But what is important in all cases is that man ought to know the truth behind the image. Natural sight becomes a metaphor for intelligible sight. To see too literally is, Derrida says, to be blind. The blind men of the Bible "see nothing because they look outside, only at the outside. They must be converted to interiority, their eyes turned toward the inside" (Derrida, 1990, 18). This is, as was seen in relation to Hegel and is again recognised by Derrida here, why the Jews are determined as unable to see the truth. The concept of sight is divided. For it is often the blind man who sees most clearly, who is able to the truth because he is not bedazzled by the outside. Yes, sight and knowledge go hand in hand. But only on condition that sight itself have a certain metaphoric sense, that it is by seeing through sensible sight that one recovers intelligible sight. Metaphor does not deviate from Hegel's conceptual system on condition that it holds within itself its own annulment and

⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and other Ruins*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault & Michael Naas (1990, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London).

prescribes and articulates its own demise. Hegel's concept of metaphor is determined as necessary only to the "extent to which the de-tour is a re-turn guided by the function of resemblance (*mimesis* or *homoiosis*), under the law of the same." (M, 270).

Each moment of emergence, of seeing the truth through its copy and repetition must be relieved. The image must return to the source. Each moment of spirit thus has the structure of a metaphor, and its content too is metaphorical. More than this, the whole chain, the system *as such*, operates as a series of metaphors. Each metaphorical emergence is relieved in the face of truth. *Mimesis*, as that which underpins this process of expropriation and reappropriation, gives to the system the structure of a metaphor; in other words, it structures the system in the same way as it structures the concept of metaphor and according to the same set of values at work in this concept. It permits thinking of the unity of the Hegelian system as a living unity, of 'life' as metaphoricity, the whole thought in parts. This order is governed by the concept of *mimesis* as *aletheia* and *homoiosis*. This order of appearance determines the order of all appearance, according to the oppositions of inside/outside, physis/tekhne. And as soon as opposition is legitimated as the structure of reason, then the other of reason is determined and ceaselessly confirmed as non-reason, nonessential, secondary and derived. This order legitimates itself in every repetition. Moreover, it legitimates mankind's inability to see the thing-itself, by giving this inability a transcendental necessity. It belongs to the structure of spirit that it 'cloak' itself in this way; that is why man must truly 'live' spirit if he is to see it reveal itself there. Man cannot see the origin of visibility, nor can he see visibility, but must content himself with its (secondary) productions, with the *outside* of production, the visible itself. The visible declares the order 'behind' it.

Mimesis

I have begun to elaborate the chain of *mimesis* that leads from the natural productivity of spirit to the conceptualisation of metaphor in man's own productions. In spirit's first work of *mimesis*, this original productivity allows spirit to create its own mirror image. But this is not the creation of the image so much as the creation of the mirror itself. The mimetic relation does not yet lie in the product resembling spirit as an imitation. What precedes imitation is the production of the conditions for imitation, the production of the product. This division and repetition are spirit's natural work. It is, first of all, *this* division and repetition that are governed by the concept of *mimesis*. They are then repeated in every repetition according to the structure of *mimesis*. The way in which spirit's products resemble it does not lie in some external manifestation, in a copy or likeness, but in *their production* of this external manifestation. Spirit's products imitate spirit's acts of production in their own acts of production. What they reproduce then, is (re-)production itself, the production of production at the origin of the origin.

In truth then, the real product here is productivity. The product of this relation is another relation in which the son becomes the father. This process of mediation is (the) *between*; that is, it is (the) *between* (between) the father and son, *between* the absolute expropriation and reappropriation of spirit from one into the other, that moment *between* spirit being lost and found. This mediation is the passage of *mimesis*. The father or spirit, as the origin, gives order. What he names through his relation to the son then, is the rational order, the order of order: S *is* P. This then determines the structure of all emanation; it is not immediately divine, rather it is a structure in which the son (the repetition, copy or double) is issued from the father (spirit, the origin-al), in which the son belongs to the father (as his repetition) and returns to the father (by shedding his non-essentiality, his body, and becoming father himself, spirit). The supplement of the copula, of the *is*, adds a third term: mediation or analogy itself.

All this is housed under the possibility of *mimesis*. That the son can belong to, be issued from and return to a father in the same way as the repetition belongs to the original is only possible under the concept of *mimesis*.

Mimesis thus allows for the infinite to posit itself by passing into the finite, for the origin to retain its 'enigmatic absence' by passing into the repetition or copy. This 'passing' into-and-out-of names unity itself. The possibility of Hegel's entire dialectic depends on spirit's ability to divide from itself in this way so that, this relation, of the *is* as the *between* of division and unity, structures phenomenology. Hegel's system is thus structured by *economimesis*, by the fold of pure productivity at the origin. *Mimesis* describes this relation of spirit to itself as one of expropriation and reappropriation. But Derrida's term '*economimesis*' emphasises that this relation operates as an economy. Hegel's *mimesis* is a detour that operates with a view to the reappropriation of the same since what it gathers up into itself *is* itself. It operates with a view to a return on its investment, a result which permits expansion but no loss. It can be seen then, that the *Aufhebung* relies on the concept of *mimesis* and economy. As Derrida says, the "very concept of *speculative* negativity (the *Aufhebung*) is possible only by means of this infinite correlation or *reflection*" (M, 43). Such is the plus and minus of *mimesis*, understood outside of mathematical formalism and lifeless counting.

Since the process of recognition is the primary and natural action of spirit, of *what is*, *mimesis* orders the natural movement of spirit. Natural because essential, *mimesis* fulfils a transcendental necessity, a need *of* spirit. And this relation between spirit and itself, this 'original' *mimesis* therefore also provides the exemplar or model of the mimetic relation, forming a 'primary' or naturally occurring *mimesis*, the *as such* of *mimesis*. This original *mimesis*, this first division of spirit, the division into opposition itself, is then repeated or

imitated in every opposition of spirit to itself. *Mimesis* then, is not only the relation of spirit to itself, but forms the chain in which each part is linked to that which precedes it and that which follows it. Man too will repeat this relation in relation to his own productions. As such, *mimesis* is not only that which determines the relations within specific moments of spirit, for example that of the family, but as that which allows such moments to hang together to form the totality. In this way, *mimesis* ties together the concepts (and non-concepts) of repetition, productivity, representation, metaphor, belonging, addition and division, the supplement, expropriation and reappropriation, the *between* and the *at-once*. It also reintroduces the possibility of *mimesis* as resemblance or likeness. For man's acts resemble the acts of God or spirit. And the son resembles the father, is made in his image. From this it becomes possible to postulate that the father resembles the son, that there is, at the very least, a theoretical resemblance between them. This theoretical resemblance then becomes a condition or zero point for resemblance or likeness itself.

By reading *Glas* in conjunction with Derrida's writings on *mimesis*, it can be seen how the concept of *mimesis* acts as a condition of possibility for spirit's self-knowledge. The form of *belonging* it institutes governs and controls the play of the centre (spirit), its telos (spirit), and the movement and relations *between* origin and telos. It ensures relief. Each formal moment re-produces this relation in its own self relation, including the way it, as finite, *belongs* to the totality, as infinite. It structures the order of appearance that is crucial to the process of, and provides the criteria for, spirit's self-knowledge. At the same time it accounts for the *being-there* of opposition, of representation, of space and time. *Mimesis* thus explains the relation of being *between* knowledge, the *is* between reason and unreason, intelligible and sensible, reason and understanding. Spirit is dependent upon *mimesis* to order and restrain the endless repetition to which it purposely gives rise. *Mimesis* orders the father/son relation which in turn accounts for this division/fold that *mimesis* has made possible.

3.2 The Immaculate Conception

In the previous section I explored what *mimesis* means for Derrida and the ways in which it is at work in Hegel's dialectic. The father-son relation is governed by *mimesis* as that which allows for the production of the product, for spirit to reveal itself to itself. *Mimesis* therefore plays a role in structuring the dialectic, determining the *value* of the production and of the product according to the criteria of revelation, of *mimesis* as *aletheia*, itself determined according to the criteria of truth. What is revealed then, is revelation *as* 'the-revelation-of' made possible by revelation *as* 'the-relation-between.' This determines the relations between the intelligible and sensible, inside and outside, spirit and matter, ensuring the reappropriation of philosophy's outside back into the integrity of its inside. Revelation, as the emergence into exteriority, is both the relation of production and the result of this production, the product itself. According to the telos of absolute unity, both will be relieved.

At least, such should be the case. But as Derrida's reading of the structures of representation shows, two difficulties remain. One of these difficulties centres around the relief of metaphor, representation, the outside and the phenomenal. In other words, it centres around the relief of relation-ness itself. For as *Glas* demonstrates, while the family describes reconciliation as the return to unity, reconciliation within the family remains incomplete. This in turn affects/effects the ultimate reconciliation of spirit with itself in *Sa*, obliging spirit to maintain its relation with all that supplements it. This is a problematic I want to return to. For it hinges itself on the first difficulty I want to explore here. *Glas*, together with a certain reading of *mimesis*, suggests that the origin of the dialectic, spirit, does not have the unity which Hegel claims for it. Instead, it suggests that prior to this unity, and as a condition for it, there must be a pre-ontological moment, a moment of the same that is not identical. This moment, while acting as a condition for spirit's dialectical relations or relations of *mimesis*,

does not itself belong to the dialectic. As such, it does not belong to very the structure of belonging which it inaugurates.

Both of these problematics, the impossibility of reconciliation and the impossibility of an original unity, have important ramifications for the concept and structure of representation. And both stem from what takes place at the beginning of the religious moment, when the son has not yet even entered upon the scene. They are inscribed in the beginning of conceptuality, in the relation between the father and the mother. This moment is the Immaculate Conception, which Derrida nicknames the *IC*.⁹

The IC

Firstly then, I want to explore the possibility that there is no original unity at the beginning of the dialectic; or perhaps better, that any original unity must be contaminated with an original disunity, with an impossibility of original unity. In order to explore this possibility/impossibility, it is necessary to mark out the chain of oppositions which belong to the parents and which determine their identities. For in the *IC*, Derrida says that there is an “ultimate split between presence and representation, between the for-itself and the in-itself.” This ‘ultimate split’ “has the form of an inequality between the father and the mother” (G, 94a). This inequality on the one hand suggests that the mother is the weaker and inferior opposite of the father. Yet at the same time, this inequality is thought out through the parents’ sexual difference, and crucially, their sexual difference is determined by Hegel as absolute opposition. As Derrida says,

⁹ The *IC* is also a pun on Kant’s *Imperatif Categorique* or categorical imperative, which provides perhaps Hegel’s antithesis, just as the Jews are antithetic to Christianity. Indeed for Hegel, Derrida says, “Kant is Jewish: he believes in a jealous, envious God” (G, 213a).

At the religious moment of religion, the son has a father, but the father remains beyond phenomenal actuality, invisible. The father is in (it)self, but does not present himself. The son cannot in effect interiorize, cannot actually have for himself what of the father is in (it)self. And who remains absent, transcendent, hidden, separated, severe, *not-there*. The paternal generosity, its goodness only represents itself, neither presents nor assimilates itself (G, 222a).

In contrast,

[Mary] makes the child without knowledge, without an actual father. The father is object, but a nonpresent object; the mother is present (phenomenon), but is not an object for consciousness; she only presents herself to the heart. There is reconciliation with the mother, but in natural, sensible, worldly immediacy. Reconciliation with reason, that of the heart and reason, of the for-(it)self and the in-(it)self, does not yet accomplish itself (G, 223a).

The father is spirit; the mother or “wife here is as it were matter” (G, 36a). This opposition of mother and father is equivalent to all the other oppositions of the series, spirit/matter, presence/representation, intelligible/sensible. And as has been shown, representation is dependent upon this series of oppositions, as is the concept of *mimesis*, which links representer and represented. The opposition of the parents is equivalent then, to “*opposition itself* as it constitutes the structure of representation.” (G, 223a).

The opposition of the parents is thus equivalent to the oppositions that govern the structure of representation. And yet, it is also *more* than equivalent. For sexual difference is not one opposition amongst others, and the family is not simply one set of relations among others. It determines the structure of the *Aufhebung* as the relation between this opposition and relief. As I noted earlier, for Derrida “*Aufhebung* is very precisely the relation of copulation and the sexual difference” (G, 111a) and this relation is thought out in the family. Sexual difference *as* opposition and its relief (through copulation) into the child thus determines and prescribes the pattern of difference *as* opposition and its relief into unity. Since sexual difference *comes first*, as the first opposition involved in the conception of conception, and since it is

determined as *absolute opposition*, all oppositions conform to the opposition involved in sexual difference. Sexual difference is thus *the* opposition, the opposition of opposition.

Now, since this opposition of the parents is *the* opposition, it is necessarily in conformity with the other oppositions of the system, and in conformity with the structures of representation. But at the same time, and with an absolute necessity, since the opposition of the parents is *the* opposition, then anything amiss in this relation, any conceptual rupture or deviation, will have a knock-on effect on the rest of the dialectic. And indeed, such is the case. For as Derrida's reading of this opposition in the *IC* has shown, in this opening of/to conceptuality opposition is already at work. It is not *produced* in the *IC* but is at work there. The father and mother are already opposed. And this is important because the family metaphor represents the relations of the dialectic in general. This metaphoricity has revealed and inaugurated a structure in which it is the father who divides himself and in whom all divisions are united. This is what the Last Supper teaches. Yet what the *IC* teaches seems to contradict this. For it says that at the beginning of the beginning there are 'two,' a father and a mother, and they are already opposed to one another. This in turn places what Derrida describes as an 'ellipsis' at the heart of the family relation, a division at the centre of the centre which "results from the family not managing to centre itself. It has a double focus, a double hearth" (G, 220a). In the conception of conception, the opposition of sexual difference is already functioning; there are already 'two' and these 'two' are opposed in an opposition which conforms to the opposition of spirit and matter, of intelligible and sensible. Now, in order to understand why this is problematic, it is necessary to put this opposition another way. This time, Derrida says that as *the* opposition, sexual difference is not simply *a* difference.

Male and female are not opposed as two different, two terms of the opposition, but as difference and indifference (opposition, division). The sexual difference is the difference between indifference and difference. But each time, in order to *relieve* itself, *difference* must be determined in/as *opposition* (G, 112a).

Sexual difference is therefore *the* difference, *the* difference between difference and indifference. Not only are the parents already opposed then, but in this opposition it is the father who is difference. He is thus also differentiation. He is the carving-itself-out of spirit, the activity of spirit opposing itself to itself as the process of mediation and recognition, production and representation. The father is virility; he is the producer of differentiation and opposition. Once again, this is in conformity with all I have said thus far. But its consequences begin to disrupt the very play of relations which the family has instituted. For differentiation is dependent upon opposition. Difference, the forging of identity, is itself an identity. It can only get going through its difference to indifference. But since difference can only come into being through this opposition, it cannot exist before such opposition. It can only produce itself out of and against indifference. The father can only be a father at the moment he opposes himself to the mother. He can only forge himself through his difference to indifference. Before that moment, he has no identity since identity only comes through the differentiation, that is, through opposition. This has a dramatic consequence: before opposition, before spirit is a father, he must be in a relation of contamination with this indifference. Spirit cannot simply claim to come first.

Remaining enveloped in the undifferentiated unity, the woman keeps herself nearer the origin. The man is secondary, as the difference that causes the passing into the opposition. Paradoxical consequence of all phallocentrism: the hardworking and determining male sex enjoys mastery only in losing it, in subjugating itself to the feminine slave. The phallocentric hierarchy is a feminism; dialectically feminism, making man the *subject* of woman, submits itself to Femininity and Truth, both capitalized (G, 113a).

Derrida is not saying here that the mother comes first, that the woman *is* the origin. What he is saying however, is that “genealogy cannot begin with the father” (G, 6a). There must be a

moment prior to differentiation, a moment prior to difference and to the difference between difference and indifference. This moment is a condition for opposition and for the difference between difference and indifference. It will thus be the condition for the parent's opposition and for the relations of the *IC*. And it will thus be a condition for the concept of representation, which is dependent upon the opposition of the parents. But as yet, this moment prior to the 'beginning of the beginning,' prior to the relations of the *IC*, belongs to neither party. It is a moment without identity (for only the father *as* opposition has identity) and without opposition. It is a moment of indetermination, of a sameness (for there is no opposition) which is not identical.

This is a moment when the parents are neither identical nor opposed, when each is the same and other. This same and other, this originary contamination, is a condition of possibility for opposition as the opening to the system. It is thus a condition for the dialectic itself. And it is a condition for representation and for the concept of *mimesis* which orders the production, place and value of representation. This originary moment is, I believe, a moment of *différance*. For while Derrida does not name *différance* here, his description points to it.¹⁰ And it does so in an extremely specific way. For according to the concept of representation that Hegel employs, identity can only be produced out of opposition. But since this moment is prior to opposition, it has no identity. It is a condition for opposition and it is thus a condition for representation as the opposition between presence and presentation, father and son, origin and repetition. But as a condition for representation and as that which is non-oppositional, it cannot as yet play with the distinctions between original and repetition, inside and outside, intelligible and sensible. It must somehow be *between* all these oppositions, both

¹⁰ That Derrida does not name it *différance* perhaps reflects a desire to resist making *différance* into a key word or master term for the play of forces (*différences*) which are always themselves context bound and *différent*.

and neither. It is this being 'both and neither' that makes this moment a moment of *différance* which confounds the Hegelian concepts of presentation and representation.

Différance as/at the Origin

Before I relate this problematic to the concept of *mimesis*, I want first to explore the way in which Derrida describes this moment that precedes the *IC*. For it must be understood how this moment of *différance* at the origin of the origin has no identity, no figure and no appearance. Identity, appearance and figure can only result from opposition. Therefore, this moment prior to opposition and differentiation is, Derrida says, a pure essenceless play. It is the condition of all appearing, the *différance* (the indifference of indifference and difference) which will allow for opposition and representation. But as yet it cannot itself be the object of opposition or representation.

To describe this *différance*, Derrida links back to what Hegel says in his texts on natural religion:¹¹ the first moment of natural religion, prior to the birth of the son, is indifferent. But

¹¹ *An Aside on Reading*: the question of Derrida's strategy and of the place of this example within *Glas* 'as a whole,' needs at least to be noted. For Derrida describes his approach in *Glas* thus: "Leaving the completed system (*The Philosophy of Right*) as a seedling, I go down again toward the first steps of its constitution, the texts of Frankfurt, Jena, the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. But I am also going to try not to transform love and the contradiction of the family affect into a privileged guiding thread, verily into a *telos* or model [*regulateur*]. I am interested in the experience, not in the success or the failure. The circle is not practicable; or avoidable" (G, 19a). As a result, *Glas* works according to divergent imperatives, an acknowledgement that "nothing is ever homogenous in the different ruptures, stances, or salutations of speculative dialectics" (G, 198a).

This problematic is a family problematic. The dialectic itself dictates how one ought to go about approaching it. It declares a structure of reading that is necessarily in conformity with the structure of the system in general. For Hegel, the truly spiritual reader will animate the dead letter. Not only animate, but also relieve and discard the objective body of the sign in order to get to the meaning, the spirit, beneath it (G, 76a). This reader must be committed to grasping the living relations that hold together the unity of the encyclopedic circle, the soul of the discourse, even in the face of the detour through the inanimate shell of its presentation, the textual fact of the written. The act of writing therefore presupposes the act of reconciliation inherent in reading, of meaning meeting up with itself in self-presence within the auto-affectation of the spiritual reader. It does so according to the structure, once again, of the retrieval of spirit after it has lost itself and dispersed into the exteriority of matter, into the word. One can read badly by not feeling the living unity of spirit, by seeing only the written; previous philosophies offer testament to this, to a Jewish form of reading.

this indifference cannot yet be thought as the opposition of difference. Rather, it is a sameness which lacks identity since it has not gone through mediation and recognition. A moment of immediate consciousness, it has in common with *Sa* a lack of figure. In this moment, spirit is its own proper concept but this concept remains in abstract indetermination.

As Derrida says,

But in order to grasp this *intended* sense of the discourse, one must also understand the living unity of texts, of a corpus: "the Hegelian system commands that it be read as a book of life. The categories of reading must first bend to that" (G, 83a). Hegel thus declares how to read Hegel. But the consequences of this method are at-once both Hegelian and profoundly anti-Hegelian (G, 84a). On the one hand, a line of filiation can be traced that leads from the 'young Hegel' to the 'mature Hegel,' from the 'early' to the 'later' texts. Hegel the father then, producing a series of sons which go to compose a family, in which the germ of the later works is contained in the early works, a seed that will mature and flourish. A family question (G, 56a). It seems that one could get away with only reading the later texts, which will, presumably, contain all of Hegel. And this is what is so anti-Hegelian. For while the whole is indeed reflected in the part, to dissemble the corpus in such a manner, to apply a "dissociating and formal analysis," is to risk "missing the living unity of the discourse" (G, 84a). One wouldn't even know where to begin: "how does one distinguish philosophically a before from an after, if the circularity of the movement makes the beginning the end of the end? And reciprocally? The Hegelian tree is also turned over; the old Hegel is the young Hegel's father only in order to have been his son, his great-grandson" (G, 84a). The spiritual reader can neither content him or herself with dipping into Hegel, reading this or that text in-itself, nor in "privileging here the law of temporal or narrative unfolding that precisely has no internal or conceptual sense" (G, 5a). Reading then, is founded on a contradiction, one that cannot be relieved. The whole resides in the part, yet the part must not be *too* privileged. One can follow a chain that leads from early to later texts, think Hegel's thought as a seedling that matures, yet such a chain must not be *too* privileged.

Now, it seems to me that Derrida's reading of the *IC* and of the sexual difference that founds this moment conforms to and plays around with these contradictions inherent in reading, with this question of method as "a family question" (G, 20a). For the family seems to govern the approach of Hegel; it also seems to govern how Hegel wants to be approached. Yet, as I have shown, while the family may govern, it is not a self-identical, immutable concept. The identity and the function of the family is uncertain or undecidable, and this manifests itself in Derrida's response to Hegel. This is shown in part in the way in which Derrida 'flits' from one Hegelian text to another, quoting from this text then that text, never stating the supposed *origin* of the citation. One moment Derrida treats a text as a closed context, next opening out to treat the Hegelian corpus as a whole. And this is particularly pertinent when it comes to Derrida's reading of the *IC*, because while the *IC* is located in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in which Hegel also treats natural religion, Derrida's reading is also informed by the Jena *Philosophy of Nature* in which, Derrida says, Hegel's determination of sexual difference and copulation is thought out. At the same time, he also says that the discourse on sexual difference belongs to the philosophy of nature and moreover, that there is no conceptual gap between the *Encyclopedia* and the Jena philosophy (G, 114a). The origin of conceptuality, the conception of conception, is thus spread out, located and constructed out of a diverse series of forces, influenced here by natural biology, there by moral philosophy. Derrida relies on this diversity to open out and expand (upon) the place of the mother, of the 'woman's chain,' within the dialectic. Indeed, while so far the father has enjoyed mastery over the discourse, Derrida asks whether the *Aufhebung* is not in fact a "Christian daughter-mother?" (G, 203a), the very opening to division and the excluded transcendental of the system.

The figure withdraws at the origin and the end of religion, before and after religion: whose becoming literally describes a consuming destruction of the figure, between two suns. Another jealousy of the Hegelian God who begins and ends by making disappear – in fire – its own proper figural representation. This jealousy, this *zelos* does not boil down to the passion of the Jewish God that never shows himself. Here God shows himself neither at the beginning nor at the end of times, but that is in order to show himself the whole time through his figures and in an absolute light.
(G, 237a).

The origin can only ever posit itself through its relations to and difference from what it opposes to itself. Therefore, at the origin of the origin there is an invisibility. Here, spirit is “only its own proper concept. But this concept stays in abstract indetermination, has not yet unfolded, manifested, produced itself” (G, 237a). On the one hand, this conforms to the entire system; the absence of the origin is what permits its absolute authority. Moreover, it also conforms to the way in which spirit is only itself through mediation and recognition. But it also suggests that, since spirit only becomes itself through making itself the result of itself, before this moment spirit is not quite itself, a not-yet of itself. For here spirit “is a One at once infinitely multiple and absolutely different, different from self, a One without self” (G, 239a).

In some difficult passages in *Glas*, Derrida describes what this pre-philosophical, pre-metaphysical condition of possibility looks like. In this first moment, he says, spirit relates itself to itself according to a simple relation. Spirit appears as pure light, a manifestation in which nothing appears but the appearing. This light figures the absence of figure, a purely visible and thus invisible sun that allows seeing without showing itself, consuming all in its phenomenon. By very reason of its indifference and the absence of opposition, this pure content is without essence. It is fated to work in the service of essence, to be subordinated to sense and reason, but it is as yet outside the horizon of onto-theo-teleo-logy; it is without being, a pure essence-less play, a play that plays limitlessly, at play (G, 238-9a).

This pure burning is the pure appearing of appearance, before appearance itself. It is a “sort of signifier without signified,” pure phantasm, the total absence of propriety and truth (G, 239a). It is thus a reckless and wasteful burning. For just as one cannot look directly at the sun for fear of blindness, so one cannot look at this pure light. It offers up no object that can engage with spirit in recognition. Without the capacity to make anything appear, except appearance itself, spirit gains no return on this investment. At this stage, spirit is pure (unproductive) productivity. It repeats itself as the repetition of repetition. But it repeats in this repetition no object. It produces no product, only pure light, pure visibility, pure indetermination. It is thus a moment which is prior to the oppositions which command the concepts of presentation and representation, a moment which has yet to be made to work in the service of those oppositions.

Mimesis: The Opening of Economy

What changes? What allows this pure indifferent burning to pass into the production of identity, into mediation, and essence? And, as Derrida asks in the same paragraph, once opened, how will this play be arrested?

How, from this consuming destruction without limit, can there remain something that primes the dialectical process and opens history? Conversely, if the process begins, how would it reduce this pure differential consuming, this pure destruction that can proceed only from fire? (G, 240a).

In order to go through the movements of recognition constitutive of absolute self-present self-identity, spirit must pass out of this abstract indetermination. It must divide itself, become what it is not, and thus pass into itself. It must open opposition.

In order to be what it is, purity of play, of difference, of consuming destruction, the all-burning must pass into its contrary: guard itself, guard its own movement of loss, appear as what it is in its very disappearance. As soon as it appears, as soon as the fire shows itself, it remains, it keeps hold of itself, it loses itself as fire. [...]

It sacrifices itself, but only to remain, to insure its guarding, to bind itself to itself, strictly, to become itself, for-(it)self, (close)-by(it)self. In order to sacrifice itself, it burns itself. The burning then burns itself and goes out [...]. This sacrifice belongs, as its negative, to the *logic* of the all-burning, one could say to the double register of its accounting, accountable calculus. If you want to burn all, you must also consume the blaze, avoid keeping it alive as precious presence. You must therefore extinguish it, keep it in order to lose it (truly), or lose it to keep it (truly) (G, 240-41a).

Once again, this is in conformity with the movement of the dialectic as it mediates itself by passing into its opposite. This pure difference, different from itself and thus indifferent, ceases to be in order to remain what it is. It passes into opposition and into its other. This is the origin of history, the first division which opens the historical process. As Derrida says, the pure burning “sacrifices itself, but only to remain, to insure its guarding, to bind itself to itself, strictly, to become itself, for-(it)self, (close)-by-(it)self” (G, 241a). The burning passes into the for-itself and is lost. Yet better for it. This “sacrifice, the offer, or the gift do not destroy the all burning that destroys itself in them; they make it reach the for-itself, they monumentalise it. The historical placing in orbit of the consuming instant gives the instant the chance [...] of subsistence, of the *remnance* determined as subsistence” (G, 240-1a). Everything must be burnt, and that includes the blaze, the all-burning, itself. In order to keep it, it must be lost, such is the logic of dialectics and/as economy. In order to emerge from indifference, difference must divide and dissociate itself from this indifference; *and* at the same time, it must maintain its (self) (as) (relations with) this indifference.

As such, spirit must give (to) itself a first fold in order to pass from abstract indetermination to determination. It must make a gift of itself to itself such that it can pass into opposition, recognise and know itself. But at the same time, since this moment is pre-oppositional, how can this passage or this folding occur? Derrida’s answer to this question is the ‘pre-ontological gift.’ Here, Derrida’s understanding of the gift must be grasped in all its complexity. For this pre-ontological gift, which Derrida also describes as the “prototype of

the gift,” is not “one gift amongst others; it hands over the gift itself, the very gift of the self for (it)self, the present for (it)self. The gift, *cadeau*, names what makes itself present ” (G, 243a). This gift *precedes* all the categories to which it will, inevitably, give rise. It is thus a condition for the very categories to which it will, inevitably, be subordinated. This ‘prototype’ of the gift is the only genuine gift. It is the model gift, but it is a model which can never be repeated, copied or imitated. To repeat the gift is necessarily to annul it. As such, this prototype of the gift, that which is the only possible gift, cannot be conceptualised. It cannot exist within the Hegelian economy, but belongs properly to that which is *before* all economy:

The gift *is not*; the holocaust *is not*; if at least *there is some such*. But as soon as it burns (the blaze is not a being), it must, burning itself, burn its action of burning and begin to be. This reflection (in both senses of the word) of the holocaust engages history, the dialectic of sense, ontology, the speculative. The speculative is the reflection (*speculum*) of the holocaust’s holocaust, the blaze reflected and cooled by the glass, the ice, of the mirror (G, 242a).

The ‘prototype’ makes the ‘concept’ of the gift possible. As soon as it passes into its other, the concept of the gift is born and the genuine gift, the prototype of the gift, is lost. Speculation is thus written on the mirror of this all-burning of the true gift, the gift that opens up economy, opposition, conceptuality, and that thus offers itself to sight, to presentation and representation. The prototype opens this economy but it does not belong to that economy. Nonetheless, as soon as the economy is opened, the gift is swept up into it, reappropriated and put to work. From then on, the gift cannot help but operate (in) a structure of exchange. For as soon as the gift is received *as* gift, gratitude acts as recompense, a payment for, or an annulment of, the debt. To recognise the gift *as* gift is to be engaged in this economic movement. This means that the gift *as such* cannot exist. A gift *is* a gift to the extent that it is not contaminated by economy, by exchange and payment. So the gift cannot be thought by the dialectic to which it necessarily gives rise. The pure gift thus cannot exist *as such*. Or

rather, it always already exists but only *outside* the Hegelian economy. It cannot exist within the dialectic, since there is it subject to the very process of exchange that annuls it *as a gift as such*. It can only *be* to the extent that it cannot *be*. It belongs in the non-present past or the non-present future, but cannot be “alive as a precious presence” (G, 241a). It is pre-ontological. But as soon as it gives itself as a gift it opens the possibility of ontology and from then on is ceaselessly re-appropriated by it. As Derrida points out, *cadeau* also means chain (G, 243a). The gift is thus always swept up into the process of exchange opened by this non-present ‘prototype’ gift.

[T]he gift, the sacrifice, the putting in play or to fire of all, the holocaust, are under the power of ontology. They carry and de-border it, but they cannot not give birth to it. Without the holocaust the dialectical movement and the history of Being could not open themselves, engage themselves [...]. Before, if one could count here with time, before everything, before every determinable being, there is, there was, there will have been the irruptive event of the gift (G, 242a).

Now, another way of thinking through this ‘prototype’ of the gift or this holocaust is by linking it to what Derrida says regarding the *pharmakon*.¹² The *pharmakon*, refers “back to a *same* that is not identical, to the common element or medium of any possible dissociation” (D, 127). It thus “constitutes the medium in which opposites are opposed” (D, 127), a fund of opposition, an undecidable and fluid matrix out of which opposition can spring. It is, Derrida says, analogous to a “mixed medium” “which belongs neither simply to the sensible nor simply to the intelligible, neither simply to passivity nor simply to activity” (D, 126). Derrida describes the *pharmakon* as

the movement, the locus, and the play: the (production of) difference. It is the *différance* of difference. It holds in reserve, in its undecided shadow and vigil, the opposites and differends that the process of discrimination will come to carve out. Contradictions and pairs of opposites are lifted from the bottom of this diacritical, differing, deferring, reserve. Already inhabited by *différance*, this reserve, even though it ‘precedes’ the opposition between different effects, even though it precedes

¹² Derrida discusses the *pharmakon* in ‘Plato’s Pharmacy,’ a reading of Plato’s *Phaedrus* (in *Dissemination*).

differences as effects, does not have the punctual simplicity of a *coincidentia oppositorum*. It is from this fund that dialectics draws its philosophemes. The *pharmakon*, without being anything in itself, always exceeds them in constituting their bottomless fund. It keeps itself forever in reserve even though it has no fundamental profundity or ultimate locality. We will watch it infinitely promise itself and endlessly vanish through concealed doorways that shine like mirrors and open onto a labyrinth (D, 127-8).

Moreover, as Derrida notes in 'Plato's Pharmacy,' there is an affiliation between the *pharmakon* and *mimesis*: "undecidably, *mimesis* is akin to the *pharmakon*. No 'logic,' no 'dialectic,' can consume its reserve even though each must endlessly draw on it" (D, 139). This is the 'other' of *mimesis* which, like the *pharmakon*, offers up relations before the institutionalisation of relations, before opposition and identity.¹³ Inevitably it, like the *pharmakon* and like the gift, will be reappropriated into philosophy, understandable only in terms of opposition and as a resource. But before its appropriation by philosophy, it is outside the categories of the understanding; indeed, it is a condition for those categories. Furthermore, it is outside the categories for presentation and representation (such as inside/outside, intelligible/sensible), and yet is a condition for those categories. It is thus also a condition for the *concept* of *mimesis*. Prior to this moment when it is put to work then, this pre-ontological *mimesis* offers a kind of pre-relation-ness, a moment of pure *between-ness*. This *between-ness* will be a condition for appearing terms but it cannot be thought by those terms. Like the *pharmakon*, pre-ontological *mimesis* is a moment of *différance* which precedes and allows for opposition. It thus exceeds opposition, is a pure play or movement of constriction and counter-constriction in which no positive terms are engaged. It is thus both and neither the presenter and/nor the presented, both and neither an original and/nor a repetition. Rather, it is transcendental for these opposing terms, and for the relations and differences between them.

¹³ I will discuss this 'other' or non-concept of *mimesis* in more detail in the conclusion to this thesis.

The Transcendental: The Concept-Non-Concept of Mimesis

In an extremely difficult passage, Derrida describes this transcendentality.

To give means-(to say) to give an annulus, and to give an annulus means-(to say) to guard, to keep: guard the present. [...] The annular movement re-stricts the general economy (account taken and kept, that is, not taken or kept, of the loss) into a circulating economy. The contraction, the economic restriction forms the annulus of the selfsame, of the self-return, of reappropriation. The economy restricts itself; the sacrifice sacrifices itself (G, 244a).

The giving of the gift is the giving of an annulus or an economy of exchange. In other words, the 'prototype' of the gift, whilst not belonging to economy, opens or gives (over) a restricted economy of exchange in which a return on the investment, a result, is guaranteed by the telos of absolute unity. The gift thus makes possible the (for it)self, the series of oppositions which guarantee the play of representation and the resultant self-identity. The annulus thereby ensures the restricted economy of a return of the same, provoking that return whilst being outside of that very economy. But that which gives this economy does not belong to that economy. This is constriction, the relation, difference and tension between oppositions.

Now, this

(con)striction no longer lets itself be circumscribed as an ontological category, or even, very simply, as a category, even were it a trans-category, a transcendental. The (con)striction – what is useful for thinking the ontological or the transcendental – is then *also* in the position of transcendental trans-category, the transcendental transcendental. All the more because the (con)striction cannot not produce the 'philosophical' effect it produces. There is no choosing here: each time a discourse *contra* the transcendental is held, a matrix – the (con)striction itself – constrains the discourse to place the nontranscendental, the outside of the transcendental field, the excluded, in the structuring position. The matrix in question constitutes the excluded as transcendental of the transcendental, as imitation transcendental, transcendental contra-band. The contra-band is *not yet* dialectical contradiction. To be sure, the contra-band necessarily becomes that, but its not-yet is not-yet the teleological anticipation, which results in its never becoming dialectical contradiction. The contra-band *remains* something other than what, necessarily, it is to become.

(G, 244a).

This passage can be thought out in a series of undecidables. Firstly, what Derrida here calls constriction is the passage of *mimesis* as it governs the tightening or contraction of spirit into opposition and thus into economy. This constriction, which makes it possible to think the father/spirit, or for the father/spirit to think himself, is thus transcendental. But this transcendental cannot be thought by the system. It is not a positive term but is, on the contrary, that which makes it possible to think positive terms such as the ontological, the transcendental, or the name 'father.'

Thus constriction is transcendental since it governs spirit's self-relation. It follows that what makes this constriction possible, that which *gives* this economy of constriction, must be transcendental for this transcendental. This 'prototype' or this 'pre-ontological *mimesis*' "hands over the gift itself, the very gift of the self for (it)self, the present for (it)self" (G, 243a). And since this giving, this transcendental transcendental, is *before* the system, *outside* the system, it cannot, as same and other, as the tension between difference and relation, be thought by the dialectic. It is thus a condition for thinking the ontological but it does not belong to any ontology. This transcendental transcendental is a counter-constriction, and it is the 'other' *mimesis*. It allows for the passage of constriction, for thinking opposition and for the spirit to know itself by dividing itself.

But Derrida is also saying more here. This play of constriction and counter-constriction means that what has always occupied the position of the inferior opposition, such as the mother, matter, or the sensible, is transcendental to the transcendental. For it has been shown how these oppositions are necessary to, and are conditions for, spirit gaining self-knowledge. They thus occupy the position of what Derrida describes as the excluded transcendental, the transcendental transcendental or transcendental contra-band. However, it must be remembered that as soon as these terms become transcendental, then the other term becomes

their transcendental. For they too are only understandable *in* or *as* opposition, *in* and *as* relations. Thus, it is not a matter of simply reversing fortune here. As soon as they gain authority they must lose it.

These points lead to one further point. What is transcendental (is) the constriction, the differences and relations which allow for this 'back and forth' movement, for the tension *between* the father and the mother, *between* the represented and the representer, the intelligible and the sensible. It is this tension, this *between*, that does not-yet belong to dialectics. Not because it does not yet or is yet to belong, but because it is the not-yet which can never belong. It is a condition for dialectics (and so is the not-yet of dialectics) but it can never belong to dialectics since it *is not*. For constriction or *mimesis* is not a positive term and it has no presence. Moreover, constriction or *mimesis* must itself be subject to constriction or counter-constriction. It too (is) only *in* relation *as* relation. The very law of *mimesis*, in all its forms, dictates this. Thus the law-non-law of *mimesis* is itself in a relation of constriction and counter-constriction. This in turn throws the concept of the transcendental out of whack. For since the transcendental, for example constriction, cannot be thought without that which it subordinates and opposes to itself, without constriction or counter-constriction, it can never be truly transcendental. Each movement of *mimesis* is transcendental to the other, which means that both, and neither, can be absolutely transcendental. It is thus this tension between these two transcendentals that is transcendental, yet at the same time non-transcendental since it too is in a relation of dependency. Contamination and constriction, the binding of the one in the other, in other words, the play of *mimeses*, operates here as imitation transcendentals; they nowhere *are* outside this play of opposition, tension, difference and relation. This is their *différance*.

This law-non-law, which exists only *as* relation *in* relation, *as* examples *in* examples, makes the unity of an origin both possible and impossible. On the one hand it permits thinking the concept of origin or absolute unity. 'Pre-ontological' *mimesis* and the concept of *mimesis* are therefore conditions of possibility for history, for the dialectic, for the concept of origin and for *Sa*. They are a condition for appearance, for the oppositions that make it possible for spirit to know itself through representation. But since this origin or unity can only be thought through its contamination, its difference and its relation to its 'other,' this at-once makes originality or unity impossible. In the same way, it cannot be said that *différance* here is an origin. For while it is a condition of possibility for the origin (for the father, spirit) it is also a condition of impossibility for it (since the father is now in a relation of contamination with something which precedes it and upon which it will depend). As that which makes the origin both possible *and* impossible, this *différance* cannot claim itself to be origin.

Whereas the origin of speculation ought to be the father, Derrida's reading of the indifferent non-originary origin of the (concept of) origin shows that speculative dialectics can only get going somewhere *between* the mother and the father. The terms mother and father thus can no longer be understood on the basis of absolute opposition. Their sexual difference remains, but as *différance* rather than opposition. For their cross-contamination begins to undo the oppositionality upon which the system depends. The security of the term father, which has until now controlled the question '*what is?*,' begins to tremble. But caution it needed here: Derrida is not attempting to swap one authority for another, to claim that the mother now has the power formerly attributed to the father, nor to bow down to some kind of natural, almost theological, mysticism of the name 'mother.' contamination and its effects on the concept of dialectical repetition are what are at stake. Dialectics can only begin in the *between* between

the mother and father. This *between* is that which lies between or before opposition, between or before the concepts of propriety, identity, and so forth.

A ruse of reason or the woman's eternal irony, each able to take itself for the other and *to play the other*. If God is (probably) a man in speculative dialectics, the goodness of God – the irony that divides him and makes him come off his hinges – the infinite disquiet of his essence is (if possible) woman(ly) (G, 188a).

In order for each to be itself, it depends upon the other. Woman's irony lies in her ability to play the other, to allow herself to be posit(ion)ed as the opposition. In this she makes the goodness of God possible, allows him to give himself in form, to reveal himself, to be represented. Since the goodness of God consists in giving himself over to sight, she allows for the nonjealous operation. She is a condition of possibility of God's goodness, the indifference that makes him divide himself in order to appear. She *means-to-say* that the origin is always already divided and that *Sa* itself will remain caught in this division, in the need for opposition. *Sa* too needs woman. But she functions as a simulacrum, outside the categories and oppositions that the concept of *mimesis* depends upon to organise the system. And again there is the twisting of temporality that gives to the system its structure, but which no longer recoups those temporal contortions as spirit's play with itself. Instead, such temporality begins to make that structure disfunction. As Derrida says, "She is to come after, to be followed, to be continued" (G, 187a). The dialectic remains caught in this temporality of the *between*, in the fold of *mimesis* that spirit gives to itself as it ceaselessly folds (in on) itself.

3.3 *Mimesis* (as) Remains

[O]n one side Christianity has succeeded in lifting the Jewish limitation; and the death of Christ has permitted the sons to be sons; baptism has taken place. On the other side, Christianity repeats, a little higher up, the Jewish cutting; the disciples remained as sheep without a shepherd; the name has not been recognized. The check of filiation, of the family, of the city, hypocrisy, calculus, violence, appropriation. Stones/Peters (G, 92a).

The economy thus opened is not easily closed. As I have shown throughout, Hegel's dialectic is working towards the telos of absolute unity, toward the moment when representation will be relieved by absolute presence. The family describes what this reunification will look like, but crucially, within the family moment, unity is not realised. It is anticipated, and it "represents itself, but the represented reconciliation is not the actual reconciliation" (G, 220a). The family, which describes reconciliation, is not itself reconciled. It remains no further than representation.

In effect: in absolute religion, division in two is *not yet* absolutely overcome by reconciliation. An opposition stays, determines itself as an anticipatory representation. The ultimate limit of the absolutely true, absolute, revealed religion: it remains no further than the *Vorstellung*. The essential predicate of this representation is the exteriority of what presents or announces itself there. It poses in front of it(self), has a relation with an object that is pre-sent, that arrives before only inasmuch as the object remains outside (G, 219a).

God, as father and origin, remains a representation. He is not present, but presented. Christianity therefore leaves within the system a conceptual rupture: the need for future reconciliation. This need has been determined by the split between presence and representation, this split itself determined by the sexual difference at work in the paternal metaphor (which, as I have already shown, is more than *simply* metaphoric), which is itself determined by *mimesis*. Hegel's Christian family is an attempt to (ac)count (for) the split in presence. The problem is that while it may be able to account for it, it cannot overcome it. The religious scene declares the truth about that reconciliation. But in truth what it says, is that there is no reconciliation. Rather, the reconciliation

puts itself forward there as an object for consciousness that *has* this representation, that has this representation *in front of it*. The reconciliation has produced itself, and yet it has *not yet* taken place, is *not present*, only represented or present as remaining in front of, ahead of, to come, present as not-yet-there and not as presence of the present. But as this reconciliation of being and selfsame (reconciliation itself) is absolute presence, absolute parousia, one has to say that in religion, in the absolute revelation, presence is present as representation (G, 220a).

Christianity *names* the reconciliation but *is not* that reconciliation. The relation of *mimesis* that holds together the two sides of oppositions as yet remains to be relieved. This means that spirit remains ensnared in its need for the phenomenal, in its need for opposition and relations. The Last Supper does manage to envisage the structure which would allow for reconciliation; it anticipates, describes and prescribes. But reconciliation itself is not actually, presently realised; religion still guards some split within itself.

What prevents religion from reaching *Sa* is opposition itself and the being-*between* of opposition. The opposition between the mother and father is the opposition between presence and representation. And as soon as (the sexual) difference determines itself as absolute opposition, as *the* difference, no longer can what Derrida describes as the ‘phantasm’ of the *IC* be avoided. “The phantasm is the phenomenon” (G, 224a). The limitation given by the phantasm is the limit of the son’s return to the father, of spirit’s returning home. For the phantasm is the effect of mastery of each side of the opposition.

All the oppositions that link themselves around the difference as opposition (active/passive, reason/heart, beyond/here-below, and so on) have as cause and effect the immaculate maintenance of each of the terms, their independence, and consequently, their absolute mastery. Absolute mastery that they see conferred on themselves phantasmatically the very moment they are reversed and subordinated (G, 223a).

According to the very process of recognition that Hegel puts into play, neither side of the opposition can do without the other. And this in turn has a significant consequence. For it

means, according to Derrida, that the absolute is held in chains. (G, 106a) In order to think this through, once again the *IC* must be understood.

The phantasm of the *IC* as (absolute) phantasm is absolute truth. Truth is the phantasm itself. The *IC*, sexual difference as opposition (thesis against thesis), the absolute family circle would be the general equivalence of truth and phantasm.
(G, 224a)

The truth is truth *and* phantasm, truth (+phantasm). The phantasm gives the measure of truth, the revelation of truth, the truth of truth. This opposition between truth and phantasm should be resolved in *Sa*. So, *in principle*, *Sa* permits thinking the end or the limit of this limit, of making the limit appear as such. However, at the same time *Sa* can only think itself *at* the limit: “*Sa*, resolution of the absolute opposition, reconciliation of the in-(it)self and the for-(it)self, of the father and the mother, isn’t the very *Sa* of the phantasm, is it?” (G, 225a). Derrida teaches the importance of the phantasm: *Sa* will be the final accomplishment of the phantasm, and hence the end of the phantasm. But it will also be the truth of the phantasm, that is, it needs the phantasm as that which ‘it can be the truth of.’ *Sa* remains caught in this need for the phantasm since without it, it is simply pure indifference, pure indetermination. As such, the *between*, the relation of *Sa* and phantasm, adds a third term which can no longer be relieved.

Dissemination *displaces* the three of ontotheology along the angle of a certain re-folding. A Crisis of *versus*: these marks can no longer be summed up or ‘decided’ according to the two of binary oppositions nor sublated into the three of speculative dialectics (D, 25).

The (need for) phantasm and for the relation between oppositions *remains*. Once again this is thought out as a war of the sexes, a war between the two series of oppositions, male and female, in which the male law *ought* to win out. It is a war between the (male) law of light, of activity, violence, truth; and the (female) law of the night, of the hidden, of nature, of passivity, preservation, death; between the in-(it)self and universality of the male law, and the

for-itself, the singularity of woman. Woman consigns herself to the organisation of the burial place, the monument, the tomb (G, 142a). She guards death, the 'shining manifestation' of truth, on the outside (as the outside of the inside).

So ideality, the production of the *Aufhebung*, is an onto-economic 'concept.' The *eidos*, the general form of philosophy, is properly familial and produces itself as *oikos*: home, habitation, apartment, room, residence, temple, tomb, hive, assets, family, race, and so on. If a common seme is given therein, it is the guarding of the proper, of propriety, of one's own: this guarding retains, keeps back, inhibits, consigns the absolute loss or consum(mat)es it only in order to better reg(u)ard it returning to (it)self, even were it the repetition of death " (G, 134a).

Once again then, it is the family metaphor that explains the scene: the family law figures the work of mourning; the house and the tomb form the theatre or scene of this representation; the woman stage-manages the scene, assures the representation. For with marriage comes the wife's duty to bury the dead husband, to erect a burial place in place of the dead. To replace the dead then, to substitute and supplement the dead with a monument, a tomb. What the woman receives, what she buries, is not the dead in-itself. Spirit leaves the corpse. What she buries immediately passes into its contrary, so she guards, in essence, nothing. She guards the *between*, the fold, the syntax, the space and time of all that *belongs* without *belonging*. This value of this marrow-less corpse has been ceaselessly confirmed throughout. The soul departs, progresses. Only the body, nature, the phenomenal, remains. But only in thus remaining can this progression of the soul take place. Otherwise there would be only pure abstract negativity, a non productive negativity in which the soul would be wasted alongside the body. Derrida asks: "What is it to make a gift of a corpse?" (G, 143a). The gift here is the relation of exchange, of the woman assuring the progression of spirit, opening the economy. So burial, mourning, is a condition of possibility for the *Aufhebung*. Such is the gift of the corpse. She is a condition of possibility and impossibility for the system.

This possibility wavers or truncates itself in (the) burial (place). What is a stone monument, such is the question. But in this the stone rocks – the *what is?* The *what is?* is, like every question in general, engaged in the reappropriation process the stone threatens. The question's question-form is in advance petrified (G, 167a).

The stone, the monument or the ideality remain. But they remain by both *belonging* and not *belonging*. And it is very precisely this *belonging-not-belonging*, this problematic of what happens once spirit has moved on to its next opposition, that threatens the entire process of expropriation and reappropriation. For the stone unbalances the question, the '*what is?*,' threatens the ability of the system to reappropriate the outside, makes the outside *belong* and not *belong* to the inside. In being both part of the truth and necessary to the truth *and* an extra, addition or supplement which is not the truth, the remains remain and yet do not remain. That is, they remain only in relation, as relation. What remains then, is relation-ness itself, the fold of *mimesis* and the need for the other that cannot be relieved.

The Failure of the Immaculate Commerce (ic)

When Hegel opens the speculative economy, he implicitly relies on the concept of *mimesis* to legitimate the form of spirit's departure from-self, which is itself needed to legitimate the existence of the 'outside' of philosophy, of history, empiricism, false knowledge, and so forth. *Mimesis* thus organises a system of need and belonging which ought to ensure the coherence of the system. As Derrida says in 'Economimesis,' the "pure productivity of the inexchangeable liberates a sort of immaculate commerce" which reflects man's "pure freedom and his pure productivity" (EC, 9). But at the same time, the concept of *mimesis* is contaminated by its non-conceptual 'other.' From then on, the security of both the origin (spirit) and the telos (spirit) of the system is threatened. The concept of the origin becomes unstable. The production of production at the origin of the origin makes the origin into a source. The origin/spirit defines itself by its actions. Since its action is productivity, it defines itself as the origin *of something*. This means that the origin as source must always

already be divided. This original division in the origin reproduces itself in every production, in every moment, so that from then on the origin carries with it the necessity of this *something*. What is produced is division itself, what goes on to the next moment is spirit as already (again) divided. *Mimesis* defines this originary split in the origin itself, the already divided origin of all seed. The process of spirit coming to know itself can never get going without that to which it gives rise. And once this economy has been opened, this need perpetuates itself. The religious moment of religion, of the family, remains trapped in its need for its other. The father still needs the son *and* the mother. And the intelligible still needs the sensible, the signified a signifier. Opposition needs opposition *and* the relation between them. Spirit still gives itself in metaphor. The *actuality* of this *de facto* representation forms an opposite, an object that, like every object, sets itself over and against consciousness. Since it remains caught in opposition, *between* absolute subjectivity and objectivity, because it has this object *in front of it*, absolute religious consciousness remains caught in the opposition, in the division. Reconciliation remains a beyond (G, 221a). Absolute reconciliation is constrained by its very concept of itself as oppositional, as the unity of the opposition unity/opposition.

This constraint applies to the telos of the system, absolute knowledge. *Sa* also retains its need for opposition. For what *remains* in *Sa* is the veil itself, the *between*, the fold. For all the unveiling of this veil, this manifesting of the manifestation, the veil remains. The ultimate split between presence and representation lies in their very opposition. As Derrida says, “[t]he veil does not signify the enigma, rather the enigma is the structure of the veil suspended between two contraries” (G, 256). What remains then, is that which separates *and* holds together the opposition of opposition. That is the veil of *mimesis*, and *Sa* must be thought through it. It is this structure of the veil that remains to be spiritually relieved, always. The Last Supper scene inaugurates the comparative structure that allows mankind to

read these folds and veils. But Christ's death repeats the opposition of his birth. It is true that he does leave behind the comparative structure, allowing the scene and the structure in general to be read. But he prevents that structure from fulfilling itself. The true check of filiation comes with the ongoing need for opposition. "In breaking in two and in fleeing, he [Jesus] has declared war in the name of reconciliation; he is divided in his own proper split, hardened against division itself, multiplying it and raising it thus to infinity" (G, 93a). "What enters consciousness as the in-itself is reconciliation, insofar as it holds itself beyond; but what enters consciousness as presence is the world that awaits transfiguration" (G, 94a). Present in the heart, the in-itself of reconciliation is cut off from consciousness, present only as what is for-itself, representation. Its actuality is divided (G, 93-4a). The scar of this division will then resound throughout all of Hegel's philosophy. It gives to each moment its need for the next. Reconciliation will remain incomplete.

Mimesis makes the first fold into an always already. The fold itself is already folded. And it prevents the possibility of a last fold, of absolute reappropriation, an absolute return to the same with no difference. The father must already be in some relation of dependence with, and contamination with, the mother. Spirit will always require the supplementary assistance of the outside, of metaphor, representation, and of the relation which allows these to function as outsides and as representative. While Hegel can present absolute unity, he can do so only through re-presentation. He can anticipate the moment when the relation will no longer be needed, when *mimesis* will efface itself and spirit will be absolutely present and self-identical, but he cannot make it present. The supplement of the relation, of *mimesis* which allows unity to be seen, to reveal itself, is thus always needed. *Mimesis*, that which is designed to ensure appropriation, is itself unreappropriable, the excluded and the quasi-transcendental of the system. It will always need its representation *and* the relation which holds represented and representer together, truth + phantasm. The family moment which

articulates *mimesis* say that relations can only be given *in* and *as* relations. It thus inscribes the need for future reconciliation within the very inauguration and articulation of relations which announce the identity of this reconciliation. There is thus always too little or too much: “The remain(s) of time undecides itself between the three and the more-than-three, the fulfilment or the emptying out of signification ” (G, 231).

This excess is the relation of *mimesis* itself as that which *remains* to be relieved. Each division and its reappropriation is always, at-once, an expropriation. The consequence: spirit *remains* caught *between* resolution and dissolution, *between* spirit and phenomena, *remains* dependent on the tension *between* both sides of the opposition according to the very structure of opposition it has put in place. The product of mediation is always another mediation. Each mediation or dialectic is always dialectic + phantasm. But the + can no longer simply be bracketed off, nor can it be assigned the status of a simple accessory. The product of speculative dialectics *is* this tension or contradiction *between* the two, as that which produces production itself. As such, the true product of speculative thought is production itself. The paradox in Hegel’s system: the ideality, the product, the *remains*, are needed, essential to the progression of spirit yet claimed to be inessential. Such is the contradiction that makes Hegel’s system move. This can no longer be thought of as dialectical contradiction or the movement of the *Aufhebung*. It is rather a contradiction in contradiction. The supposedly secondary and external products of spirit, the monument, the *remains*, *belong* according to a temporality that undoes itself.

Thus, Hegel opens a system of supplementation in which every supplement itself requires a supplement, and in which every repetition refuses to fold itself absolutely back into the ‘original.’ Metaphor, language, rhetoric, can no longer be relegated to the status of an accessory; they affect the system and put the system into effect. Derrida’s reading shows

how the problematic of belonging is open to elaboration (EC, 3). It shows that metaphor, relations, the sensible and the phenomenal *belong* properly to the space of philosophy. But only inasmuch as they also cannot belong. This 'cannot belong' marks a condition of possibility, for it is the movement or expropriation and reappropriation, the tension, the relations and the differences between belonging and not belonging that carry the force. No longer can either the beginning or the end of philosophy ensure a kind of purity of spirit (philosophy). Every definition implies a preceding definition, every law another law. "This implication of the defined in the definition, this abyss of metaphor will never cease to stratify itself, simultaneously widening and consolidating itself" (M, 253). Such is the logic of contamination and the contamination of logic. It opens the dialectic to the possibility of the endless dissemination of meaning. This engages spirit with the need for *always more*.

Conclusion: Derrida and the Duplicity of *Mimesis*

What announces itself here is an internal division within *mimesis*, a self-duplication of repetition itself, *ad infinitum*, since this movement feeds its own proliferation. Perhaps then, there is always more than one kind of *mimesis*; and perhaps it is in the strange mirror that reflects but also displaces and distorts one *mimesis* into the other, as though it were destined to mime or mask *itself*, that history – the history of literature – is lodged, along with the whole of its interpretation. Everything would then be played out in the paradoxes of the supplementary double: the paradoxes of something that, added to the simple and the single, replaces and mimes them, both like and unlike, unlike because it is – in that it is – like, the same as and different from what it duplicates. (D, 191).

In conclusion, I want to turn to Derrida's reading of *Mimique* by Stephan Mallarmé in 'The Double Session,' the third essay in *Dissemination*. By problematising both reference and ontology, the cornerstones of the concept of *mimesis*, *Mimique* challenges philosophy's conception of the relations between ideality and textuality, thing and word. This un-loosing of the theological moorings which restrain the concept of *mimesis* leads to a text in which there is an array of appearances which reflect no reality and which mirror no truth. In this way, it openly confronts the problematics of *mimesis* and representation which the dialectic of Hegel has been so keen to subordinate and control.

'The Double Session' draws out the ways in which *Mimique* articulates and subverts this relation between truth and word, idea and book. For while *Mimique* is a text about a crime of murder, it is also a text about writing, about the relation between fiction and the real which, importantly, by declaring itself to be a fiction, does not purport to tell the truth of that relation. It makes this relation between the truth or the thing-itself and its repetition into its 'subject,' 'thematizing' this problematic in order to expose its workings and its contradictions. It enacts the relation between the 'real' and writing, between the thing itself and its commentary, an enactment that is repeated by Derrida when he questions what the status of his text becomes, of where 'The Double Session' and commentary belong in this analogical order. It is thus an examination of the relation between philosophy and its 'object,' between philosophy and writing, philosophy and

literature, writing and commentary, an opening out of the concept of the book into the text. This reading will point to a further elaboration of the quasi-transcendental fictional writing that I noted in the introduction, and to the possibility that deconstruction is both, neither, and more than, philosophy and literature.

The Origin(al) and (its) Repetition

One of the first tasks that Derrida undertakes in 'The Double Session' is an exploration of the relations between determinate texts and the question this raises as to what constitutes the 'origin' of, or the original, Mallarméan text. Derrida says that *Mimique* is a reaction to a reading (D, 195). Mallarmé has read *Pierrot Murderer of his Wife* which has 'been set down' by M. Paul Margueritte. But this booklet is itself a transcription for the mimed 'event' has already taken place, only then to be committed to type by the mime artist himself. Moreover, it is after the performance that Margueritte asks Bessier to write a preface to the booklet he has yet to write. As such, "the temporal and textual structure of the 'thing' (what shall we call it?) presents itself, for the time being, thus: a mimodrama 'takes place,' as a gestural writing preceded by no booklet; a preface is then planned and then written *after* the 'event' to precede a booklet written *after the fact*, reflecting the mimodrama rather than programming it " (D, 199). Now, this structure can be understood in the terms laid down by the concept of *mimesis*. The 'original event' of the mimodrama constitutes the origin or source; in it, the mime plays out the 'ideas' that he already has in his head. The original booklet then copies and reproduces this event which is itself a repetition of an 'idea,' which serves as the model in this sequence. The booklet is thus a dialogue that is set down, transcribed according to the metaphysical concept of *mimesis* which says that writing transcribes thought or inner speech, and that the booklet thus contains these re-memorations as commemorations. As such, already the booklet is a copy of a copy, which then provides the model for other copies, such as Mallarmé's, and its various additions/editions. It seems then, that in spite of its complexity, a chain links

origin to repetition, imitated to imitator. *Mimique* seems to comply with the laws of *mimesis*, or more specifically, with the laws of *homoiosis*; it is a copy which can trace its heritage back to an original source. From this, comparisons can be made between the repetitions, and questions asked as to whether Mallarmé has been faithful to the original and so forth.

So that while the ‘original’ mime in no way forms a *simple* pretextual referent, it is nonetheless tempting “to consider it a system closed upon itself, folded back over the relation, which is certainly very tangled, between, let us say, the ‘act’ of the mimodrama [...] and the retrospectiveness of the booklet ” (D, 202). But the difficulty lies in locating a point at which this process arrests, the location of a first instance or a textual seed that could be named the model for *Mimique*. For *Mimique* explains that it is at once another text, completely other from the booklet, *and* in a relation with that booklet. And the difficulty arises in the relation between “the medium of writing and the determination of each textual unit ” (D, 202). Now, Derrida’s text is quite dense here, but to simplify it can be said that on the one hand, *Mimique* refers back to another writing, the booklet, which acts as its referent and its model. But since it *contains* this reference, since it refers to it only within *itself* as a determinate structure, Derrida says that this reference no longer exists ‘outside’ the text but is *inscribed* within it. The structure of reference means that *Mimique* is at once open and closed; open, since *Mimique* refers to something ‘outside’ of itself, and closed, since this reference is contained within the determinate structure of *Mimique* as a determinate textual unit. The booklet thus acts as a kind of preface to *Mimique*, as an outwork or *hors d’œuvre*, and so does not belong to that text; *and* at the same time, it acts as a “seed, a seminal infiltration” which provokes *Mimique* (D, 202). And “since the process of cross-referencing and grafting is *remarked inside* Mallarmé’s text [it] thereby has no more ‘inside’ than it can be said to be *by* Mallarmé ” (D, 205).

The inside, the supposed security of the inside of the text, is open, contaminated, and yet, is also closed at the same time.

I have already said quite a lot about contamination and the possibility/impossibility of demarcating and maintaining strict oppositions, such as that of inside/outside. What is in question here are the effects of such contamination on the structure of reference, on the relation between what exists as a model and its repetition. This kind of structure recalls what Derrida says in *Living On: Borderlines* and in 'Cartouches' (in *The Truth in Painting*).¹ In both these texts, the paradigm or model no longer stands in a position of authority beyond inscription, but is inscribed into the series: paradigm becomes paradigm-effect, the effect itself made possible only through this inscription. In *Cartouches*, Derrida shows how, since the 'original model,' the coffin which Titus-Carmel draws, is itself an artefact or a product such that, since it is itself already a reproduction, it can have "no absolute privilege with respect to a series of productions or reproductions" (TP, 195). What is at stake here then, is a question of seriality without paradigm, of the model or paradigm being transformed into a paradigm-effect once it takes up its place in the series which, as noted in the previous chapter, it is of necessity bound to do. The model or paradigm, which would like to think of itself like a title, suspended above the text or holding the text suspended, ensuring its frame and its points of reference (D, 179), is thus put into question. A similar structure is at work in *Mimique*. The model no longer stands 'outside,' 'before' or 'beyond,' but is 'contained' within the text, both within and without. This leads Derrida to say that truth, the truth of the *what is* being imitated, therefore does not comprehend the actions of the mime, does not provide the context by which these actions are to be understood and to which they are compared,

¹ Jacques Derrida, 'Living On: Borderlines,' trans. James Hulbert (Deconstruction and Criticism, 1995, The Continuum Publishing Company, New York) and *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington & Ian McLeod (1987, The Chicago Press, Chicago & London). Henceforth the title *The Truth in Painting* is abbreviated as TP.

but is rather put to work (or play) as an effect within the series. Truth does not comprehend *Mimique* but in contrast, is comprehended by it (D, 207).

Repetition as Inauguration

From this follows a second point. Mallarmé's mime seems to be caught in the act of his own inauguration, in the moment when he composes himself on "the white page that he is." The mime imitates nothing. The mime *imitates* a crime that, as will become clear, has never been committed. But since the crime has never been committed, the *imitation* is an inauguration. An inauguration that is itself prescribed, and thus *preceded*, by the command that nothing should precede or prescribe the action that has not taken place and will not take place.

What Mallarmé *read*, then, in this little book is a prescription that *effaces itself through its very existence*; the order given to the Mime to imitate nothing that in any way precedes or preexists his operation. [...] It is prescribed (we will define this word in a moment) to the Mime that he not let anything be prescribed to him but his own writing, that he not reproduce by imitation any action [...] or any speech. The Mime ought to write himself on the white page he is; he must *himself* inscribe *himself* through gestures and plays of facial expressions. At once page and quill, Pierrot is both passive and active, matter and form, the author, the means, and the raw material of his mimodrama (D, 198).

The gestural act of the mimodrama is described as anamnesis, a memory of a past crime that has already taken place at the moment the Pierrot mimes it. He thus mimes "*under the false appearance of the present*" (Mallarmé, quoted in D, 200). But since nothing has preceded the mime's operation, there is no past-present to be imitated. So that, "in the apparent present of his writing, the author of the booklet, who is none other than the Mime, describes in words the past-present of a mimodrama which itself, in its apparent present, silently mimed an event – the crime – in the past-present but of which the present has never occupied the stage, has never been perceived by anyone, nor even, as we shall see, ever really been committed" (D, 200). It is thus prescribed to the mime that he follow no prescription, that he repeat a crime that never took place. No present precedes

his 'operation,' nothing anticipates or accompanies his 'performance.' His movements are not "linked with *logos* in any order of consequence" (D, 195). What kind of prescription is this then? Could it be, that while *Mimique* now appears to resist reappropriation by *mimesis* as *homoiosis*, it is nonetheless the case that the mime is engaged in *mimesis* as *aletheia*? That the prescription is performed in the action?

He represents nothing, imitates nothing, does not conform to any prior referent with the aim of achieving adequation of verisimilitude. One can here foresee an objection: since the mime imitates nothing, reproduces nothing, opens up in its origin the very thing he is tracing out, presenting or producing, he must be in the very moment of truth. Not, of course, truth in the form of adequation between the representation and the present of the thing-itself, or between the imitator and the imitated, but truth as the present unveiling of the present: monstration, manifestation, production, *aletheia*. [...] If one followed the thread of this objection, one would go back, beyond imitation, to a more 'originary' sense of *aletheia* and of *mimeisthai* (D, 205-6).

This sense is familiar. It is what I have called 'primary' *mimesis* and it seems that the mime's actions can still be caught by this metaphysical interpretation. Rather than imitation, this is production in its most original sense, a production that performs itself, that produces itself as truth in the moment and movement of its own production, that legitimates itself as truth through the immanence of its self-relation. But this interpretation of *Mimique* comes up against a difficulty. For this 'original' action of the mime is itself a reproduction. Even assuming that this is a moment of production, of *aletheia*, it is nonetheless the case that this model puts itself forward as a repetition, and moreover as a repetition of an original that has not taken place. The play of referencing criss-crosses the text, weaves itself backwards and forwards in a play in which no temporal sequence can determine an origin, a model or a first act. The mime imitates nothing, and thus does not imitate, since nothing precedes his gestures, except perhaps the command that nothing precede his gestures, a command which is itself given only in the retrospectiveness of a booklet. This leads Derrida to determine this moment of production as mimicry. While the mime imitates nothing, there is imitation and mimicry; or at least, there is the structure of imitation, but minus the event or the *is* that is to be

imitated. So that it might even be tempting to say that the mime mimes or mimics the *aletheia* of *aletheia*, except that this moment of *aletheia* is already a repetition.

There is mimicry [...] along with simulacrum (and along with pantomime, theater, and dance [...]) We are faced then with mimicry imitating nothing; faced, so to speak, with a double that doubles no simple, a double that nothing anticipates, nothing at least that is not itself already double. There is no simple reference. It is in this that the mime's operation does allude, but alludes to nothing, alludes without breaking the mirror, without reaching beyond the looking-glass. [...] This speculum reflects no reality; it produces mere 'reality-effects' (D, 206).

The reality of the scene is inaccessible except through its simulacrum, through its double which repeats an event that never took place. So that the event or the real nowhere exists, in no-way precedes the mime that imitates it and repeats it. As Derrida says, "in this speculum with no reality, in this mirror of a mirror, a difference or a dyad does exist, since there are mimes and phantoms. But it is a difference without a reference, or rather a reference without a referent" (D, 206). Thus there is the difference between the event, the original crime, and its repetition. But these differences are contained within a spectacle in which it could not be said that one precedes the other, that one has a logical priority over the other. What is 'produced' then, is *mimesis* itself, *mimesis* as mimicry, as a structure or relation in which the positive terms, what might be termed the 'players,' seem to shift positions, one moment acting as an origin, next as a repetition. This mimetic operation does not produce manifest or unveil any presence, nor does it constitute any resemblance or adequation between a presence and a representation. But this does not mean that it does not 'produce.' For

there is the play of a scene that, illustrating nothing – neither word nor deed – beyond itself, illustrates nothing. Nothing but the many-faceted multiplicity of a lustre which is nothing beyond its own fragmented light. Nothing but the idea which is nothing. The ideality of the idea is here for Mallarmé the still metaphysical name that is still necessary to mark nonbeing, the nonreal, the nonpresent. This mark points, alludes without breaking the mirror, to the beyond of beingness, toward the *epekeina tes ousias*: a hymen (a closeness and a veil) between Plato's sun and Mallarmé's lustre (D, 208).

Mimique stages the visibility of the visible, illustrates nothing but rather re-marks spacing and play as nothing. To use the terms of traditional thematic criticism, it makes the *between* of *mimesis*, spacing, relation and difference, into its object; it thematises the nonthematic. It thus puts the possibility of reference into doubt. Or rather, it questions not the structure of reference but the decidable poles (such as origin and repetition, referent and reference) *between* which reference should work and by which reference has always been thought to have been controlled:

reference is discreetly but absolutely displaced in the workings of a certain syntax, whenever any writing both marks and goes back over its mark with an undecidable stroke. This double mark escapes the pertinence or authority of truth: it does not overturn it but rather inscribes it within its play as one of its functions or parts. This displacement does not take place, has not taken place once, as an *event*. It does not occupy a simple place. It does not take place *in* writing. This dis-location (is what) writes/is written (D, 193).

Spacing, the blank page, relation, syntax: it is textuality that carries the force of this operation. Indeed, what is left at the end of such play, what *remains*, is the play itself, the structure or relations, *mimesis*.

Mallarmé thus preserves the differential structure of mimicry or *mimesis*, but without its Platonic or metaphysical interpretation, which implies that, somewhere the being of something that *is*, is being imitated. Mallarmé even maintains (and maintains himself in) the structure of the *phantasma* as it is defined by Plato: the simulacrum as the copy of a copy. With the exception that there is no longer any model, and hence, no copy, and that this structure [...] is no longer being referred back to any ontology or even any dialectic (D, 206).

What Mallarmé identifies here then, is a division between *mimesis* and itself, between the *mimesis* of, or reappropriated by, ontology and dialectics, and the *mimesis* which can function as a structure or relation in which the positive terms (such as the model or the origin, the representative or manifestation) no longer possess authority with regards to the scene. He thus plays with “an internal division within *mimesis*, a self-duplication of repetition itself; *ad infinitum*, since this movement feeds its own proliferation”(D, 207).

Mimique thus becomes a

simulacrum of Platonism or Hegelianism, which is separated from what it simulates only by a barely perceptible veil, about which one can just as well say that it already runs – unnoticed – between Platonism and itself, between Hegelianism and itself. Between Mallarmé's text and itself (D, 207).

The *between* does not run simply between Plato and Mallarmé, but also in-*between* Plato and Plato, Hegel and Hegel, Mallarmé and Mallarmé. This was noted in the previous chapter with regard to the concept of *mimesis* and its non-conceptual 'other,' whose complicity and difference is a condition of possibility and impossibility for the Hegelian dialectic. In Mallarmé's text this complicity is thought out. Here is it seen how *mimesis* simulates itself, doubles and repeats its own doubling and repetition, indefinitely. In a sense then, Mallarmé uses the concept of *mimesis* 'under erasure.' The traditional expectations of *mimesis* are confronted with representations, manifestations and productions which no longer link themselves around the present as a 'mother-form' (D, 210). This does not tell the truth of *mimesis*; nothing is stabilised, there is no single truth, no single *mimesis* that can act as the truth of *mimesis*. There is merely a proliferation of images, doubles and repetitions, texts and origin(al)s. *Mimique* declares itself to be a *medium* of fiction,

a presence both perceived and not perceived, at once image and model, neither image nor model, a medium (medium in the sense of middle, neither/nor, what is between extremes, and medium in the sense of element, ether, matrix, means). [...] what is left is only the writing of dreams, a fiction that is not imaginary, mimicry without imitation, without verisimilitude, without truth or falsity, a miming of appearance without concealed reality, without any world behind it, and hence without appearance (D, 211).

Mimique declares itself (to be) *between*. The mime mimes reference, mimes imitation, interposes himself *between* mimicry and *mimesis*, or better, *between mimesis* and *mimesis*. He acts a simulacrum "that simulates the Platonic simulacrum" and the medium of the "Hegelian curtain" (D, 219).

Hymen, Fold, Between

in a hymen (out of which flows Dream), tainted with vice yet sacred, between desire and fulfillment, perpetration and remembrance: here anticipating, there recalling, in the future, in the past, under the false appearance of a present (Mimique, quoted in D, 209).

As I have noted before, Derrida uses a variety of “nonsynonymous substitutions” or terms for *différance*. These substitutions are determined “according to the necessity of the context,” and in the context of *Mimique*, the substitute term is that of the ‘hymen’ (M, 12). *Mimique* points up the *between*, mimicry, *mimesis*, relations, and so forth. And it does so through both the ‘content’ of the scene, its ‘theme’ or ‘story,’ and in the elements through which the scene is composed or constructed, the play of its syntax. As such, it both gives place to, and takes place in the hymen. For the hymen is a term that ‘condenses’ those points of being *between*. The hymen is *between* a crime that has and has not been committed, *between* an inauguration that is a repetition, a murder that is a suicide (since the mime plays both parts), a crime that is indistinguishable from orgasmic pleasure. The hymen is thus a sign of con-fusion. It suggests consummation, and thus has a sexual resonance, of penetration, of breaking, piercing, perpetrating. But it is also a sign of union, fusion, the identification and unity of two beings. Indeed, hymen is very precisely confusion between the two, between unity and separation which are held or maintained in their unity and separation. It articulates the way in which unity can only be understood in its relation to separation, and vice versa, thus emphasising the need for the third term, the relation itself, to remain *between* them. So that,

within this fusion, there is no longer any distance between desire (the awaiting of a full presence designed to fulfil it, to carry it out) and fulfilment of presence, between distance and non-distance; there is no longer any difference between desire and satisfaction. It is not only the difference (between desire and fulfilment) that is abolished, but also the difference between difference and nondifference. (D, 209).

Again, here is the same that is not identical. There is no longer any difference between the image and the thing, between the imitator and imitated, between the original and

repetition. This does not mean however, a relief of two into one; this is not a movement of the *Aufhebung* in which two opposing and differing terms are relieved into the one dominant term: the origin, the imitated, fulfilment, satisfaction. It is not the origin, the imitated, fulfilment that *remains*, but rather, the fusion and difference, the con-fusion. Thus what remains is not united but différent. As such, the integrity of the opposition between the two terms no longer functions, for their difference is consumed and maintained by différance. The hymen's confusion "eliminates the spatial heterogeneity of the two poles" (D, 209). The thing-itself, the signified, the imitated, is no longer exterior, anterior, or independent from the representation, the signifier, the imitator. Fulfilment no longer arrests and relieves desire, but in contrast, "fulfilment is summed up within desire; desire is (ahead of) fulfilment, which, still mimed, remains desire" (D, 210).

What is lifted, then, is not difference but the different, the differends, the decidable exteriority of differing terms. Thanks to the confusion and continuity of the hymen, and not in spite of it, a (pure and impure) difference inscribes itself without any decidable poles, without any independent, irreversible terms. Such difference without presence appears, or rather baffles the process of appearing, by dislocating any orderly time at the center of the present. (D, 210).

Hymen, neither/nor, both/either, is *between* the two terms. It con-fuses the present and non-present, the real and non-real, sows opposition into indifference. It thus produces the effect of a medium, in a double sense: on the one hand, it is a medium which envelops both terms at once (which recalls the *pharmakon*). On the other hand, it is *between* two terms, uniting and separating them as the relation that stands *between* them. It is an operation that *both* confuses oppositions and stands *between* oppositions, at-once. Importantly then, "what counts here is the *between*, the in-between-ness of the hymen. The hymen 'takes place' in the 'inter-,' in the spacing between desire and fulfilment, between perpetration and its recollection. But this medium of an *entre* has nothing to do with a center" (D, 212).

To read *Mimique* is to be, if possible, *in* the relations of *mimesis*. For the hymen is an inscribed expression of what it is to be inscribed, of the margin, the limit, or border between connection and separation. It allows for the relation between opposites to be understood, but at the same time reflects how opposition is at once linked and separated in a way that could not be further reduced to a point of truth or meaning. That is, the *between* must be understood as both and neither, both inside and outside, irreducible to neither one of the sides of this opposition. Writing as hymen then, reflects an economy of interweaving, of the unity and separation of pairs of opposites, of the trace as neither active nor passive. The hymen is thus a textile or weave that offers connections, displacements and differences (D, 213). And it is both spatial and temporal; not only does it connect and disconnect spatial terms, it also *at once* allows *and*, perhaps more notably, *disallows* thoughts of the past and future to circulate around a central presence, hinges them to that presence (allows that present to be thought) *and* releases them from its supposedly all-powerful grasp.

[T]he hymen differs (defers) from the present, or from a present that is past, future or eternal, [...] its sheet has neither inside nor outside, belongs neither to reality nor to the imaginary, neither to the original nor to its representation. The syntax of its fold makes it impossible to arrest its play or its indecision. [...] Such a stopping of the works would subsume "*Mimique*" within a philosophical or critical (Platonico-Hegelian) interpretation of *mimesis*. It would be incapable of accounting for the excess of syntax over meaning (doubled by the excess of the "*entre*" over the opposition syntactic/semantic); that is, for the re-marking of textuality (D, 231).

Textuality, writing, hymen, all relate themselves back to the metaphor of weaving, understood as connection and separation. As such, the hymen is not inscribed within truth, dialectics, or ontology, but inscribes these terms within the play of textuality: "At the edge of being, the medium of the hymen never becomes a mere mediation or work of the negative; it outwits or undoes all ontologies, all philosophemes, all manner of dialectics. It outwits them and – as a cloth, a tissue, a medium again – it envelops them, turns them over, and inscribes them [in a suspense] that is "*perpetual*" (D, 215). Indeed, Derrida says that at most it constitutes *mimed* dialectics (D, 230) in that it seems to

promise resolution, but instead inscribes resolution into textuality and in this movement describes and inscribes writing itself. This relentless and indefinite movement, this oscillation of the *between*, is thus undecidable. It cannot be resolved, reduced, or reappropriated. But its undecidability is the result of neither an enigmatic equivocity, nor a semantic depth nor a lexical richness. Rather, undecidability stems from the formal or syntactical praxis, such that, a loss of condensation notwithstanding, the term 'hymen' could be replaced by other words, such as veil, gauze, tissue, and so forth. It produces its effect through its syntax, in which the suspense is due to the placement and not the content of the words.

It is the 'between,' whether it names fusion or separation, that thus carries all the force of the operation. The hymen must be determined through the *entre* and not the other way around. The hymen in the text (crime, sexual act, incest, suicide, simulacrum) is inscribed at the very tip of this indecision. This tip advances according to the irreducible excess of the syntactic over the semantic. The word 'between' has no full meaning of its own (D, 220-1).

According to Derrida, what holds for the hymen also holds for the *pharmakon*, *différance*, the supplement. All have a double, contradictory and undecidable value that always derives from their syntax. This can be an effect that is produced 'internally,' in a word which combines two or more incompatible meanings, just as with the *pharmakon*. Or it can be 'external,' a result of the code or context in which the word is made to function, just as with the Hegelian family which works in different ways and on different levels according to its the demands of its context, and thus becomes *différant* and incompatible with itself. This undecidability, whether semantic or syntactic (and it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to separate or decide this opposition) renders this alternative between internal and external undecidable. What the terms hymen, *pharmakon*, *différance* have in common then, is the refusal to be relieved.

Without reducing all these to the same, quite the contrary, it is possible to recognize a certain serial law in these points of indefinite pivoting: they mark the spots of what can never be mediated, mastered, sublated, or dialecticized through any *Erinnerung* or *Aufhebung* (D, 221).

Such points *remain* undecided.² The hymen describes and enacts its undecidability; it begins to signify the con-fusion of its syntax. As such, the power of the hymen not only lies in its refusal of relief and decision, but in its capacity for what might be called its self-description.

One no longer even has the authority to say that “between” is a purely syntactic function. Through the re-marking of its semantic void, it in fact begins to signify. Its semantic void *signifies*, but it signifies spacing and articulation; it has as its meaning the possibility of syntax; it orders the play of meaning. *Neither purely syntactic nor purely semantic*, it marks the articulated opening of that opposition (D, 222).

The hymen describes itself, describing its folds, folds itself over itself (which is not a secondary procedure and nor does it result in self-identity). The hymen has no literal or proper meaning; it is not a proper name, (is) never pure nor proper (D, 229). It never presents itself, but rather, puts itself into effect through itself, through its syntax. As such, the hymen, Mallarmé’s name for the *between*, appears to be a term which is useful for understanding a *mimesis* that exposes its duplicity. On the one hand, the hymen is a medium that envelops opposition. In this it is similar to Hegel’s abstract indetermination. These terms, by not belonging to either side of opposition, are that out of which opposition is produced. They are the same that is not identical, showing that it is only through this medium of differentiation that positive terms can appear. As such, *mimesis* produces concepts, such as that of the origin, as well as being dependent upon such concepts for its own functioning. *Mimesis* is thus itself undecidable, and through such indecision challenges the general order of philosophy, the order of appearance that dictates that the origin precedes the repetition, that thought precedes writing, and so forth.

² “Dissemination endlessly opens up a *snag* in writing that can no longer be mended, a spot where neither meaning, however plural, nor *any form of presence* can pin/pen down the trace. Dissemination treats – doctors – that *point* where the movement of signification would regularly come to *tie down* the play of the trace” (D, 26).

It is rather the ever-shifting *différance* of relations that is at once necessary for the system and unthinkable by it.

On the other hand, the hymen stands between terms of opposition, is the medium through which they are separated and related. In this way, the hymen or between is similar to what Derrida says of the frame in *The Truth in Painting*. In this text Derrida re-thinks the importance of relation, of difference, of detachment and attachment. The between does indeed act as passage, and therefore does seem to fit in with the philosophical interpretation of the medium. But passage is all there is: what remains is the relation itself which points to (the lack on) either side. Mallarmé points up philosophy's "crisis of the alternative, of the binary opposition, of the *versus* (V)" (D, 283). The versus is a crisis for philosophy because it cannot be overcome. But in it Derrida sees a condition of possibility; for the versus is opened out, rethought as a third which cannot be relieved by onto-theology since it recalls the irreducibility of that which allows for opposition. That is, it includes the versus itself, the frame, the between as a third that cannot be relieved.

The *Mitte*, third, element and milieu, watches over the entrance to the hermeneutic circle or the circle of speculative dialectic. [...] Now this is not ambiguous, it is more or less than ambiguous. Between two opposites, the third can participate, it can touch the two edges. But the ambiguity of participation does not exhaust it. The very thing that makes – the believers – believe in its mediacy can also give up to neither of the two terms, nor even to the structure of opposition, nor perhaps to dialectic insofar as it needs a mediation (TP, 34).

The parergon is an accessory. It is neither outside nor inside, but brings the border into play as a necessity. *What is* is dependent upon the addition of the frame, the always *more* of the *between*. "The *parergon* inscribes something which comes as an extra, *exterior* to the proper field [...] but whose transcendent exteriority comes to play, abut onto, brush against, rub, press against the limit itself and intervene in the inside only to the extent that the inside is lacking. It is lacking *in* something and it is lacking *from itself*. [...] It needs the supplementary work. This additive, to be sure, is threatening" (TP, 56). Without the

quasi-detachment of the *parerga*, the lack on the inside would appear: “What constitutes them as *parerga* is not simply their exteriority as a surplus, it is the internal structural link which rivets them to the lack in the interior of the *ergon*. And this lack would be constitutive of the very unity of the *ergon*. Without this lack, the *ergon* would have no need of a *parergon*” (TP, 59-60). And this lack is pointed up on both sides. As such, it is not only the interior that is lacking, but the exterior also. Only in mutual relation and contamination, only in their relation and separation, can either *be*. “The *parergon* stands out both from the *ergon* (the work) and from the milieu, it stands out first of all like a figure on a ground. [...] the parergonal frame stands out against two grounds, but with respect to each of those two grounds, it merges into the other” (TP, 61). The *between* of *mimesis* is the neither/nor, same and other, without which nothing would *be*. As such, deconstruction must neither reframe nor dream of the pure and simple absence of the frame. These two gestures are what is to be deconstructed (TP, 73). Deconstruction then, concerns itself with the *between*, the fold, *mimesis*. It does not do so with the intention of aggrandising the frame, with giving it meaning or significance. Rather, the *between* is a-signifying and a-representative. It is a structure that cannot be separated from the terms which it is relating, and thus has no propriety of its own, and yet is a condition of possibility for propriety, as for nonpropriety. Yet in this way, it does begin to signify.

Between Philosophy and Literature, Plato and Mallarmé

to re-elaborate, account taken of this remain(s), a thought of *mimesis*: without imitation (of a represented, identifiable, previous and repeated object), without repetition (of a thing, an event, a referent, a signified), without signification (of a sense or of a signifier). Logic of uneasy strict-ure, its simulacra and phantasms defy the terms of analysis, but the logic rigorously accounts for the interminability (Glas, 149bi).

Hymen: INTER Platonem et Mallarmatum (D, 181).

I want now to examine the question that opens Derrida’s double session: ‘*what is literature?*’ In the previous chapters I have shown some of the ways in which Derrida deconstructs the concept of *what is*, in other words, concepts of essence, origin, unity,

identity, and so forth. 'The Double Session' offers another example of Derrida calling these concepts and their relations to the concept of *mimesis* into question. For Derrida shows how *Mimique* repeats and mimes structures that are found in the texts of Hegel and Plato, but also how it explicitly problematises those structures. It challenges concepts of repetition and representation, bringing into play repetitions without originals, mimicry, simulacra and phantasms. For Derrida then, *Mimique* deconstructs the order of truth and appearance, demonstrating the dependency of *what is* on the structures that allow it to articulate itself, the dependency of the inside on what it would like to think of as (the) outside of truth. *Mimique* articulates a metaphysical *mimesis* and at the same time stages the ways in which *mimesis* is duplicitous, double and divided from itself. Through this it shows that the *is* of the *what is* no longer controls the scene but is an *effect* of mimetic relations, of repetition and supplementation.

Now, since the *what is* has been problematised, what can be made of the next part of Derrida's opening question 'what is literature'? Outside of its philosophical reappropriation by the *what is*, does Derrida in any way give a sense of what literature might mean for him? I believe that this question must be framed by an understanding of the site of 'The Double Session' itself, that is, by understanding what the presentation of the double session implies, the syntax within that 'essay' as a textual unit and its place within *Dissemination* as a larger unit. For as with all (or at least most) of Derrida's texts, their strength and indeed their persuasiveness comes not only from what has been traditionally called 'content' but also from the use Derrida makes of what might be called 'style,' performativity, *mise en scene*.

As such and in order to begin to examine Derrida's response to the question 'what is literature?' I want firstly to examine Derrida's opening remark: "The double Session [...] will find its corner BETWEEN literature and truth, between literature and that by which the question *what is?* wants answering" (D, 177). Now, the question *what is* assumes not

only that there is essence, identity, unity, but also that the truth of this essence, identity and unity can be uncovered, revealed, exposed. It depends on the fundamental opposition of inside and outside (the matrix of opposition itself), and it is, as I have shown, engaged with the concept of *mimesis* which allows for the inside to represent itself and know itself through its outside. For Derrida, the question '*what is*' is one of philosophy's most basic and fundamental questions. Consequently, it can be shown that in the context of the above quotation, the *what is* stands for or represents philosophy. Which in turn means that 'The Double Session' finds itself *between* literature and philosophy. And this being-*between* literature and philosophy can be thought in several ways.

Firstly, the *between* can be thought as the place of 'The Double Session' within *Dissemination*: as *between* the texts of Plato (as the father of philosophy representing philosophy and the *what is*) and Sollers (fighting literature's corner). But this too is problematised:

This double session will itself have been picked up on a corner, in the middle or suspense of the two parts of a text, of which only one is visible, readable for having at least been published, and of which the whole is grafted onto *Numbers* which will have to be counted in. In the eyes of some, the reference to this half-absent text will be obvious. In any case, it can be taken for granted that the session and the text are neither absolutely separate nor simply inseparable.
(D, 177).

The double session is linked to the half-absent text of *Numbers*, and therefore to 'Dissemination,' Derrida's essay 'on' *Numbers* and the fourth and final essay in *Dissemination*. 'Dissemination' was published in *Tel Quel*, prior to the publication of 'The Double Session' in that same journal. 'The Double Session' and 'Dissemination' are 'neither absolutely separate nor simply inseparable': each forms a textual unit and is part of a larger textual unit; each refers to the other and yet maintains a certain autonomy. This relation repeats the problematic that Derrida noted with regard to *Mimique*, that of the con-fusion between supposedly *original* texts. 'The Double Session' and 'Dissemination' seem to motivate or provoke each other. In addition, Derrida's two texts

are provoked by other textual units which come under the names of *Mimique* and *Numbers*, or the proper names of Mallarmé and Sollers. Derrida's texts are thus responses or 'commentaries' to 'original' texts, original responses which are in some ways also repetitions, their possibility announced in that to which they respond. The location of 'The Double Session' within the syntactic arrangement of *Dissemination*, thus stages or situates itself within the very problematics announced by *Mimique*: problematics of grafting, of originality, of borders and frames between textual units and so forth. And here, just as with *Mimique*, recourse to bibliographies and source studies would be "at once endless and useless" in resolving the matter (D, 205). Indeed, for Derrida "To write means to graft" (D, 355).

Secondly, the above quotation also gives a clue as to the importance of syntax here. The first line says that the session has "been picked up on a corner, in the middle or suspense of two parts of a text, of which only one is visible, readable at least for having been published". This suggests that not only is the syntactical placement of a textual unit in question, but it also refers to the "writing in white" of Mallarmé's text: "In the course of these crossings, it will always be a certain way of writing in white that should be remarked" (D, 177). Only one part of Mallarmé's writing is visible, the other is that invisibility of spacing, syntax, which yet gains a certain visibility and prominence in *Mimique*, both syntactically and semantically, as has already been shown. Thus the double session finds itself *between* a doubling or division in Mallarmé's work, *between* visibility and invisibility, *between* semantics and syntax.

And finally, another way of understanding that 'The Double Session' takes place *between* literature and philosophy, and the one which I want to pursue here, is as a debate *between* literature and philosophy, or between two ways of thinking through and utilising the concept-non-concept of *mimesis*. The philosophies of Hegel and Plato give a reading of

mimesis that is challenged by the literature of Mallarmé and Sollers. But in placing literature *after* philosophy in the sequence of *Dissemination* (which reads roughly as Hegel, Plato, Mallarmé, Sollers) does Derrida mean to imply that literature, in coming *after* philosophy, tells the truth of philosophy? Does Derrida privilege literature as an answer to/of philosophy? Is this a Hegelianism that plays Hegel against himself? Whereas philosophy was privileged over literature by Hegel, does Derrida reverse this to show that literature offers up the truth of philosophy by *coming after*? Is Plato a stage in a Mallarméan *Aufhebung*, Mallarmé the result of Plato? Indeed, would Mallarmé's *Mimique* mean anything without Plato, without the history of interpretation that Plato has put in place? Or does literature play a role analogous to the matter that hides a secret essence, such that the truth is interpreted *from out of* literature? Isn't this to risk a Hegelianism in which the truth of the thing is to be found through its relation to its negative other, in its opposite. In other words, that literature, as 'outside' philosophy, allows the truth, philosophy, to reveal itself to itself, a stage in the passage to *Sa*?

I want to suggest a reason why Derrida turns to literature, a reason which does not make literature 'the truth of' philosophy. In turn, I hope this will explain what being-BETWEEN philosophy and literature might mean for Derrida.

The Tain of the Mirror

I have shown in the context of Hegel that philosophy, of necessity, takes recourse to elements of textuality that it *desires* to exclude from itself, elements that it *wants* to identify as belonging to the process of reaching the truth but as not belonging to the truth itself. Thus Hegel relies upon the philosophical distinctions between the sensible and the intelligible in the workings of the dialectic, but through doing so implicitly values what is the subordinate member of opposition; the sensible is the means of access to the intelligible, and moreover it *remains*, unable to be *Aufgehoben* when it comes to attaining

Sa, which can only be anticipated and projected according to the persistence and maintenance of the outside of philosophy, the nonproper, nonessential, nontruth. Philosophy is irreducibly attached to metaphoricity, to writing, to textuality, and to relations. Derrida thus marks out a reliance upon the structures of signification (indeed Derrida argues that the *Aufhebung* is in fact a structure of signification) and upon the concept of *mimesis*. While Hegel desires (and I think that for Derrida this is very much a question of desire) an independence from the written, spirit can only maintain itself through dependency, contamination and complicity with what it attempts to distance itself from, to exclude and to expel.

In contrast, the texts of Mallarmé and Sollers explicitly articulate the contamination between the idea and the written, between thing and word, showing that what has traditionally occupied the subordinate position of the sensible (writing, book, text) can no longer be relegated to the status of an accessory or provisional detour on route to truth. Mallarmé and Sollers present and represent the processes of presentation and production, the ongoing need for articulation itself, minus the security of a *what is* being presented and articulated. If Derrida turns to these particular ‘literary’ texts then, it is perhaps because they articulate writing and themselves *as* written. So for example, *Mimique* knows itself as theatre, acknowledges itself as representation: “everything describes the very structure of the text and effectuates its possibility” (D, 208). And in so doing, *Mimique* articulates the complicity of presenter and presented, to the point of ‘thematizing’ (in, as will be seen, a very non-thematic way) that complicity. *Mimique* openly articulates the philosophical and literary problematic of relations between word and thing, presenter and presented, repetition and original, problematics which philosophy would like to think of as resolved, literally through resolution.

Derrida situates his reading of the ‘thematizing’ of this complicity in the context of traditional thematic criticism, criticism which reads the text with the aim of revealing what is contained within it, hidden beneath the written. For Derrida, this criticism searches out “a nuclear unit of meaning, posed there before the eye, present outside of its signifier and referring only to itself” (D, 250). Mallarmé writes of the text as glass, and indeed, the glass becomes something like a ‘theme.’ Understood from a thematic point of view then, this glass might be determined as something like a metaphor for the act of reading, describing a window into the text, an opening through which what takes place on the “inner stage” can be seen (D, 233). The text is thus a theatre, a stage, performance, representation, and the glass is both an opening onto that scene and that through which the scene can be viewed. But there is a “proviso,”

that one read it under glass. And that one take into account the *process* of vitrification and not discount the ‘production’ of the glass. This ‘production’ does not consist – any more than does the hymen – simply in unveiling, revealing, presenting; nor in concealing or causing to disappear all at once; nor in creating, inventing, inaugurating. If the structure of this glass has anything in common with that of the hymen, then its role is to dislocate *all* these oppositions. The glass must be read as text (D, 233).

If the glass is a metaphor for reading, then it describes reading as possible only under glass. It dictates, through the metaphor, that the metaphor itself, the glass, cannot be removed or effaced. One can read only under glass, only through metaphor, writing. The glass as a metaphor says that metaphor cannot be extracted from the text, nor the text (or theme) extracted from (out of) metaphor. That through which the scene is viewed *remains*. Moreover, it must be understood as a product; the reader, as is the writer, is engaged in a process of production or ‘vitrification.’ In other words, the scene can only be read *through* writing, *in* writing, *as* writing. This glass dislocates oppositions between idea and presentation, presented and presenter, presence and representation, showing the complicity between producer and produced, the impossibility of separating the idea from its representation, articulating and demonstrating the process of production itself. The glass is not dissociable from the text, but describes the written itself, *in* writing, *as*

writing. And since the glass *nowhere is*, it cannot be unveiled or uncovered, unless one accepts that the processes of unveiling and uncovering can only be undertaken *in* writing, *as* writing. That is, under glass.

The glass thus describes reading, the entrance of the reader into the text and the opening of the text out to the reader. And it describes the production of textuality as a process of vitrification. Derrida sees a similar description of process, or processing of description, in Soller's *Numbers*. Here, the glass is described as an opening, which Derrida says, in the traditional conception of the theatre or book goes unnoticed.

The opening *already* goes unnoticed *as* opening (aperity, aperture), as a diaphanous element guaranteeing the transparency of the passageway to whatever presents itself. While we remain attentive, fascinated, glued to *what* presents itself, we are unable to see *presence* as such, since presence does not present itself, no more than does the visibility of the visible (D, 313-14).

For Derrida, the *idea* of presence, combined with the inability to see it, has acted like a lure, transfixing the philosopher "in the belief that one sees it" (D, 352). The reader is thereby blinded to that through which this presence is presented and represented. But what is read, and written, is not presence, but a representation. Indeed, (as Derrida says in 'The Double Session') "theater does not show 'things in themselves,' nor does it represent them; it shows a representation, shows itself to be a fiction" (D, 238). What the reader is glued to then, is a representation of a representation. *Mimique* thus articulates how presence is always already presented; there can be no such thing as simple presence that is present, only a presence that is presented and thus represented. What is displayed is a representation of a representation in which the process of representation is itself represented. As such, both Mallarmé and Sollers, in representing representation, double and multiply these representations, resulting in an instability or undecidability between the presented and the presenter, imitated and imitator.

Since the opening is necessary in order for the present to be thought, the present is always contaminated by the opening. And this contamination is itself doubled. For this opening, which ought to be merely a passageway or gateway, itself has a kind of opacity. So that, Derrida says, this opening is a mirror; it reflects the inside, lets the inside of the stage reflect itself to itself, but as a reflection, repetition, copy. Moreover, this mirror, which is turned inwards to face and reflect (represent) the stage, exposes only its tain,

which would (not) be *anything* if the tain were not only transparent, or rather, transformative of what it lets show through. The tain of this mirror thus reflects – imperfectly – what comes to it – imperfectly – from the other three walls and lets through – presently – the ghost of what it reflects, the shadow deformed and reformed according to the figure of what is called present [...]

[...] a kind of deformation irreducible to any form – and hence to any present – a transformation based on no original form, no raw material, no first matter in the last instance. To mark this is to remark that the alleged simplicity of the opening, of the aperature – the letting-be, the truth that lifts the veil-screen – is already regulated according to a mirror (D, 314).

For Derrida, writing is co-extensive with what it is supposed, by philosophy, merely to transport. This co-extension is not an “equivalence” and idea and word do not amount to a “pair of doubles” (D, 49). Rather than opposition, there is contamination in which writing makes possible the present, but also makes the present impossible since it is always already a presentation and representation. Therefore, one “must try to think out the taking-place of a mirror” which “throws out of whack” all oppositions (D, 315). The mirror ‘transforms’ and ‘deforms,’ adds itself like a fourth side or extra. It affects what it lets show through, making what shows through into an effect. “The fold is not a form of reflexivity. If by reflexivity one means the motion of consciousness or self-presence that plays such a determining role in Hegel’s speculative logic and dialectic, in the movement of sublation (*Aufhebung*) and negativity, [...] then reflexivity is but an effect of the fold as text” (D, 270).

Opening the Enclosure

[T]he quasi-‘meaning’ of dissemination is the impossible return to the rejoined, readjusted unity of meaning, the impeded march of any such *reflection*. But is dissemination then the *loss* of that kind of truth, the *negative* prohibition of all access to such a signified? Far from presupposing that a virgin substance thus precedes or oversees it, dispersing or withholding itself in a negative second moment, dissemination *affirms* the always already divided generation of meaning (D, 268).

According to the structure of supplementarity, what is added is thus always a blank or a fold: the fact of addition gives way to a kind of multiple division or subtraction that enriches itself with zeros as it races breathlessly toward the infinite (D, 262).

It might be tempting to think of this mirror (or this *différance* of writing) as somehow more original than the origin (a question that was raised in the introduction to this thesis with regard to whether *différance* was a more profound origin than the concept of origin). And indeed Derrida does say that this mirror does “come to stand as a source, like an echo that would somehow precede the origin it seems to answer – the ‘real,’ the ‘originary,’ the ‘true,’ the ‘present,’ being constituted only on the rebound from the duplication in which they alone can arise. [...] The ‘effect’ becomes the cause” (D, 323). But this ‘cause’ can only get going, like deconstruction, as a response, *a response that makes possible that to which it responds*. It is differant, neither active nor passive, cause nor effect, producer nor produced. It is these *différences* that are productive (as long as it is understood that they therefore must also be produced). As was shown in the introduction, this play is itself differential and cannot be an origin in any simple sense. For there is nothing outside of or before the text and this play of *différance*; no original or *what is* is being repeated, imitated or represented: “the graphic – graphicity in general – has always already begun, is always implanted in ‘prior’ writing. [...] There is nothing before the text; there is no pretext that is not already a text” (D, 328). Textuality as *différance*, a play which bounces and rebounds things off one another as in a hall of mirrors, gets things going. But there is no original mirror or original ‘textuality.’ Rather, each is reflected and thus produced in another.

Imagine that mirrors would not be *in* the world, simply, included in the totality of all *onta* and their images, but that things ‘present,’ on the contrary, would be in *them*. Imagine that mirrors (shadows, reflections, phantasms, etc.) would no longer be *comprehended* within the structure of ontology and myth of the cave – which also situates the screen and the mirror – but would rather envelop it in its entirety, producing here or there a particular, extremely determinate effect.

(D, 324)

Things-in-themselves, *what is*, Plato’s *eidos* and Hegel’s spirit, are inscribed in writing, possible only *in* writing, *as* writing. They only ‘exist’ through this play of différances and reflections, which are thus co-extensive with them. Thus the oppositions upon which the concept of *mimesis* is based, and which that concept, as concept, legitimates and perpetuates, are “reactivated, thrown back into play, but this time as effects, not rules, of the game” (D, 330-1). An other *mimesis* puts these ‘effects’ into affect, but the other *mimesis* cannot be an end point since it too *is* not but is doubled, divided, duplicitous, a representation of a representation. The fourth side, the tain of the mirror which exposes the inside but also contaminates the inside, which transports and which reforms and deforms, thus prevents the attainment of absolute knowledge in any purity. It declares its own necessity and prevents the closure of the totality.

Even though it is only a triangle open on its fourth side, the splayed square loosens up the obsidionality of the triangle and the circle which in their ternary rhythm (Oedipus, Trinity, Dialectics) have always governed metaphysics. It loosens them up; that is, it de-limits them, reinscribes them, re-cites them.

The metaphysical triangle [...] can no longer achieve closure. What remains invisible – because one thinks one sees into it – is a fourth side, a quarter, not a third (D, 352-53).

The tain of this mirror is like a screen, at once a visible projection surface for images and that which prevents one from seeing the other side (D, 314). This screen, without which there would be no writing, is also a device described in writing; the writing process is reflected in what is written; *Numbers* thus remarks the mirror, takes place in/as writing and is described in/as writing (D, 318). The mirror adds itself as an ‘originary’ supplement.

Quasi-Transcendental Fiction: Writing as Dissemination

The breakthrough toward radical otherness (with respect to the philosophical concept – of the concept) always takes, *within philosophy*, the *form* of a posteriority or an empiricism. But this is an effect of the specular nature of philosophical reflection, philosophy being incapable of inscribing (comprehending) what is outside it otherwise that through the appropriating assimilation of a negative image of it, and dissemination is written on the back – the *tain* – of that mirror. Not on its inverted specter. Nor in the triadic symbolic order of its sublimation (D, 33).

I asked earlier what literature might offer to Derrida. The answer lays in *Mimique* as a “text that is unreadable because it is *only* readable. Untranslatable for the same reason” (D, 362). If reading has traditionally concerned itself with the unearthing of a theme, a nugget of truth or knowledge, then the text of *Mimique* is unreadable. It offers up no such resolution. But if reading is rethought outside the view of a horizon of meaning and taking into account the spacing of the hymen, then Mallarmé’s text is, indeed, infinitely readable. As Derrida says, “[i]f there is a textual system, a theme does not exist. [...] Or if it *does* exist, it will always have been unreadable.” This nonthematism corresponds to the “way in which meaning is nonpresent and nonidentical with the text” (D, 250). Any theme that claims to *exist*, in-itself, as such and as *what is*, will always remain, since it desires to be outside textuality, unreadable. It can only be readable *in* and *as* writing. Or again, “if the text does not, to the letter, exist, then *there is* perhaps a text” (D, 270). And again, “there is no natural frame. *There is* frame, but the frame does not exist” (TP, 81). These propositions must be left in all their syntactic undecidability, an undecidability through which *Mimique* produces

an absolute extension of the concepts of writing and reading, of text, of hymen, to the point where nothing of what *is* can lie beyond them. *Mimique* describes a scene of writing within a scene of writing and so on without end, through a structural necessity that is marked in the text. [...] Everything is reflected in the medium or speculum of reading-writing, ‘*without breaking the mirror.*’ There is writing without a book, in which, each time, at every moment, the marking tip proceeds without a past upon the virgin sheet; but there is also, *simultaneously*, an infinite number of booklets enclosing and fitting inside other booklets, which are only able to issue forth by grafting, sampling, quotations, epigraphs, references, etc. Literature voids itself in its limitlessness. If this handbook of literature meant to *say* something, which we now have some reason to doubt, it would proclaim first of all that there is no – or hardly any, ever so little,

literature; that in any event there is no essence of literature, no truth of literature, no literary-being or being-literary of literature. And that the fascination exerted by the 'is,' or the 'what is' in the question 'what is literature' is worth what the hymen is worth (D, 223).

Philosophy has determined the literary as that which, like philosophy, repeats *what is* (albeit in a way that is weakened and further from the truth). The literary is issued out of and belongs to the great Book of the encyclopedia. But for Derrida, the literary is that which, through "affirmed simulacrum and theatrical staging" has "*issued out* of the book: it escapes it beyond return, no longer sends back its image" (D, 54). The texts of Mallarmé, and indeed Sollers, are examples of the 'ever so little' literature that has no truth or essence, which aims toward no unveiling or revelation. Literature seems to have a kind of awkwardness in its relation to the concept of *mimesis*, as *at-once* both a suspension or virtualising of the mimetic and at the same time, a dependency and submission to the laws of *mimesis*. On the one hand, as fiction it need not submit to these laws and indeed desires to be singular, inventive and idiomatic. On the other hand, there is often an impetus for the literary to appear real, to be a convincing imitation. The 'literature' of Mallarmé and Sollers submits to, plays with, and exceeds these two contradictory desires. And it does so by working with and exceeding the laws that have determined the identity of literature. The result is that the

Chain ('fiction,' 'hymen,' 'spacious,' etc.), itself both spacious and mobile; *gets caught in*, but thereby disorganizes, the whole ontological machine. [...] It is in this way that the 'Book,' the 'Mind,' the 'Idea' - the most spectacular examples of this grand scene - begin to function like signifiers unhooked, dislodged, disengaged from their historic polarization (D, 236).

But through this dependency on the concept of *mimesis* comes independence. Having shown that there is nothing 'out there' to guarantee the integrity of the book or the idea in itself, this in turn "solicits the very bases of literature, depriving it, in its very exercise, of any foundation outside itself. Literature is at once reassured and threatened by the fact of depending only upon itself" (D, 280).

The 'ever so little literature' puts the 'book' or the 'idea' into play as effects of textuality, exposing the complicity of word and thing, the "interlacing, by verse, of the necessary with the arbitrary" (D, 278). This literature gives itself over to a throw of the dice in

which not everything has been decided in advance and through which there is a glimpse of the new, the chance and risk of necessity.

This however, cannot define literature. Or better, this definition cannot exclude philosophy. Derrida says that while “there is more than one kind of writing” and “the different forms and genres are irreducible” there is nonetheless a “generality of writing”. This generality “is nothing other than the production, by writing, of generality” (D, 242). Moreover, the “different genres, which do not fuse into a total art [...] nevertheless exchange properties according to the infinite circulation of the scriptural metaphor” (D, 244). Philosophy too, intentionally or not, articulates (even inaugurates in the sense that it determines conceptuality and opposition) a dependency on the scriptural, even if under the guise of a negation and relief. Philosophy too defines itself in relation to writing, calls upon the scriptural, the weaving of the hymen, and the “veil of *mimesis*”. And this in turn makes the book of philosophy into the text of philosophy. The text, in contrast to the book, is open. It does not *contain* ‘knowledge’ in a finite manner. The text does not always say the same thing. In inserting spacing into interiority, it no longer allows the inside to close in upon itself nor to be identified with itself. There can always be *more*: *more* readings, *more* connections.

If polysemy is infinite, if it cannot be mastered as such, this is thus not because a finite reading or a finite writing remains incapable of exhausting a superabundance of meaning. Not, that is, unless one displaces the philosophical concept of finitude and reconstitutes it according to the law and structure of the text: according as the blank, like the hymen, re-marks itself forever as disappearance, erasure, non-sense. Finitude then becomes infinitude, according to a non-Hegelian identity (D, 253).

The “cubic perfection” (D, 234) of the book is open according to a practice of spacing, of syntax, of taking into account both the blank spacing in which writing takes place, and the process of inscription itself. This *more* is not the result of semantic depth, but of a play of syntax which is capable of infinitely extending its play of connections and disconnections. There is an infinite and indefinite supplementarity. If this operation or

play is condensed in the terms hymen or *between*, it is because these terms reflect “the excess of a signifier which, in its own inside, makes up (for) space and repeats the fact of opening” (D, 235). The book no longer retains its status as a mirror for thought. Rather, the production of the text is text as mechanism (D, 233). This parallel between the text and the machine enables thinking of the text as that which, independent of subjectivity, is capable of generating mechanical repetition, an archive that maintains itself outside the finitudes of living memory, that stores in its banks the memory of traces that have passed through, that functions as a network, allowing for connections between disparate elements in disparate areas.

Derrida announced that ‘The Double Session’ is BETWEEN literature and truth. And the force of this *between* can now be felt. ‘The Double Session’ is BETWEEN, neither, nor, both, either, hymeneal, doubled and divided. It is *between* literature and philosophy as *neither* literature *nor* philosophy, *both* literature *and* philosophy. This double session, which takes place in two parts but which is also doubled or divided, recalls the columns of *Glas*, a text which resists being determined as one genre or another, but is *between* two columns, *between* Hegel and Genet, philosophy and literature. In this way, neither philosophy nor literature offer the truth of the other. Rather, their contamination offers the truth which, as contamination, is also untruth, fiction, fantasy, play. This contamination does not offer itself up in the form of a concept that would, as a third term, resolve the difficulties in question. Rather, it says the continuance of relations that can only be thought in and through relations and thus continue, indefinitely.

This does suggest that deconstruction is dependent upon philosophical concepts. At the end of Chapter Three I said that the logic of contamination and the contamination of logic opens the dialectic to the possibility of the endless dissemination of meaning and engages spirit with the need for *always more*. If the dialectic is always contaminated with what it attempts to distance from itself, does this logic of contamination open deconstruction to a

dependency on the dialectic? Can deconstruction only be thought in its opposition to this other, to logic, the *logos*? Does it bind itself, by thinking the *what is not*, to always thinking through the *what is*?³

The answer to this question is double or divided. On the one hand, Mallarmé exceeds the Platonic and Hegelian concept of *mimesis* by reinscribing that concept. One might even say, that *Mimique* works with the traditional concept of *mimesis*, reproducing that original in order to distort it or to reveal its own distortion or duplicity within itself. And I do not believe (that Derrida's believes) that either *Dissemination* or *Mimique* could have the power they do without a certain dependency upon the concepts of philosophy. But on the other hand, they do nonetheless exceed those concepts. The process of working 'under erasure' allows for a writing that re-frames the dialectic and that ventures outward to say the new or the unsaid. It allows for a writing that has not been programmed and which does not always write the same. For example, what has been articulated here is the *between*. Now philosophy has, without its knowledge perhaps, always been articulating this *between*. Or rather, this *between* has been articulating itself in philosophy. Deconstruction draws out this possibility and from that opens writing to new possibilities. And it does so, precisely, by being-*between*.

It is perhaps this *between* then, that offers the non-site deconstruction seeks. Derrida articulates this *between* as a fourth side, that which exceeds both opposition and the three of dialectics. This fourth side is a mirror, a *mimesis* which reflects and distorts but which also reflects and distorts itself in the process. The text of *Dissemination* thus "affirms itself as a simulacrum and, through the work of this textual feint, disorganises all the

³ Kevin Thompson suggests that "[t]he movement of contamination, the logic of simultaneous appropriation and expropriation, may thus be the very movement of *Aufhebung* and the infinitesimal displacement of Hegelian discourse may always already defer itself. *Différance* then may never be capable of being thought otherwise than as an intrinsic opposition and, as such, always already constrained by the telos" of absolute knowledge (Barnett, 1998, 259).

oppositions to which the teleology of the book ought violently to have subordinated it.” (D, 36). This does not make deconstruction into a form of literary writing, but it does allow deconstruction to work *between* the oppositions of truth and nontruth, *between* philosophy and literature, *between* the real and the imaginary. The result is an

adventurous excess of a writing that is no longer directed by any knowledge does not abandon itself to improvisation. The accident or throw of the dice that ‘opens’ such a text does not contradict the rigorous necessity of its formal assemblage. The game here is the unity of chance and rule, of the program and its leftovers or extras (D, 54).

The Encyclopedia: Truth is Presentation

Dissemination, soliciting *physis* as *mimesis*, places philosophy *on stage* and its book *at stake* [*en feu*, *at the stake*] (D, 53).

I began my reading of Derrida’s Hegel by examining the way in which the dialectic functions as a totality, as a logic of the encyclopedia in which all finite discourses find their place in the great book of total knowledge. Here, this concept can be related to that of *mimesis*. For *mimesis* decides the status and value of the book and of writing, decides that “[t]he truth of the book is *decidable*” in ratio with its truth (D, 185). The concept of *mimesis* decrees that the book is a repetition and an addition, one which gains value through referring and relating to the thing-itself. This thing-itself, the truth or the origin(al), provides the context by which its copy can be understood and judged. This is how Plato conceives of the book, as “flattened-out *logos*” (D, 185), a translation and transcription of *logos* (itself a translation and transcription of *what is*) into writing. The book of philosophy then, is a double, a copy and a repetition, valued only in the context of truth. The book can be good inasmuch as it fits into the model of *adequatio* and can be determined as having been *issued from* and *belonging to* a wider and more meaningful context. It is good inasmuch as it takes its place in the ‘encyclopedia’ such that “all finite books would become opuscles modeled after the great divine opus, so many arrested speculations, so many tiny mirrors capturing a single grand image” (D, 46). The book

then, *belongs* to a series of repetitions of the divine model, and its value is determined, according to Derrida, by the concept of *mimesis* (D, 187). The order of appearance set up by that concept is, Derrida says, “*the order of all appearance*, the very process of appearing in general. It is the order of truth ” (D, 192).

The Hegelian family too finds its place in the book of philosophy as that which opens ontology, the possibility of a discourse about *what is*. Through the family, spirit declares how it demands to be read, how it produces and composes itself, how its products belong to and reflect back its infinite totality. The family is the product of spirit that teaches how to read the play of production and representation, the detours and diversions that make history the History of spirit’s expropriation and reappropriation. The family thus marches forth under the guise of pedagogy and metaphor, presents itself as an aside, a preface to truth, an opening to *Sa*. In this book of total knowledge the family belongs as an introduction and as an example. Its place is special in that it is the exemplary example, teaching how to read and how to follow spirit’s play with itself. But Hegel prescribes that the family too will be passed over, lost when, in the realisation of *Sa*, the example is no longer required, the metaphor redundant. In *Sa* all is transparent to itself, the completion of the book of total knowledge. Yet because of the temporality of the Hegelian system and the a-temporality of spirit, spirit is always already itself, the book is always already closed, complete, finished. The family then, merely plays out the necessary passage of spirit’s becoming. The encyclopedia regroups, totalises, and unifies this passage. It reflects God back to himself. Nature, matter, the sensible, and the outside become God’s representation of/to himself. Each moment is a finite book modelled after the One true book, “a book of total science, a book of absolute knowledge that digested, recited, and ordered all books, going through the whole cycle of knowledge ” (D, 46).

Such is Hegel’s thesis. Hegel the father declares the (anticipated) completion of philosophy. His encyclopedia conveys the organic and rational unity of knowledge. For

since truth is already constituted in the reflection and in the relation of God to himself, since truth already knows how to speak, the total book is a pedagogical book. The truth has always already occurred. The encyclopedia then, is a repetition. A repetition however, that stands as a model and normative concept for all the finite, regional, local, repetitions it will relieve into itself.

As a double derived from some primal unit, as image, imitation, expression, representation, the book has its origin, which is also its model, outside itself: the 'thing itself' or that predetermination of what exists that is called 'reality,' as it is or as it is perceived, lived, or thought by the one who describes or inscribes. Reality present, then, or reality represented, this alternative is itself derived from a prior model. The Model of the Book, the Model Book, doesn't it amount to the absolute adequation of presence and representation, to the truth (*homoiosis* or *adequatio*) of the thing and of the thought about the thing, in the sense in which truth first emerges in divine creation before being reflected by finite knowledge? (D, 44).

However, as this thesis has shown, in "the constitution of an absolute onto-logic, family discourse would not know how to be relegated to the subordinate regions of a rhetoric" (G, 94a). Unless, that is, rhetoric is valued differently. For while rhetoric is determined as a mere vehicle for truth, Derrida shows in *Glas* how truth is constituted through repetition, through its repetition in language. Truth is truth *as* language. It is this that allows Derrida to say that Hegel's system is a linguistic system, a system of signification. For repetition makes possible the truth, but as an effect. And in making truth-as-effect possible, it also disrupts that very possibility.

Man and his book are necessary to the completion of spirit. Hegel is a transcriber and translator of what has been passed down to him from spirit. But this translation is not a pure repetition. It forms an addition. A necessary addition, since spirit knows itself through this translation. Spirit is complete elsewhere yet completes itself through its repetition in man and his discourse. Man *is/and* spirit. The book *is/and* spirit. This *is/and* forms an addition, engages with repetition. This repetition *exists*, and no longer in a way that can be relieved according to the laws of internal and external necessity. It

forms an object, the *de facto* of a representation that does not *belong* to the *de jure*. So that while Hegel seeks to control that which he has fathered through the relieving play of internal and external necessity, he does not take account of the textual fact of the written. Wouldn't we have to choose, says Derrida, between the *is* and the *and*. The book *is* spirit, the book *and* spirit. "And in order that the predicative coupling be possible, a mute conjunction must enable us to think conjointly, together (*cum*) as set," the book and spirit, conceived as separate and additive (D, 53). The sense of this coupling by the *is* should be one of fulfilment, a fulfilling productivity that does not appear to repeat but to complete. Which means that spirit is somehow lacking, that it has to be supplemented. The book adds itself to spirit, but through this addition must complete it, fulfil its essence. Philosophy *is/and* presentation. It is this *is/and* that cannot be resolved, implanting a nondialectical contradiction is the heart of dialectical contradiction.

With the appearance of the book that, even if it passes for spirit's double, is added to it in that duplication of the simulacrum, there is broached or breached the text that goes beyond the always already constitutedness of meaning and of truth within the theo-onto-logico-encyclopedic space. Dissemination, soliciting *physis* as *mimesis*, places philosophy *on stage* and its book *at stake* (D, 53).

Mimesis allows for the presentation of truth. It makes truth present. And presented. Time again intervenes, but no longer to be relieved. Present *and* presented. Hegel cannot make temporality (time as the truth of space) meet up with itself. For Derrida, philosophy or *Sa* thus becomes "the myth of absolute reappropriation, of self-presence absolutely absolved and recentered" (G, 221a). Philosophy lives on the lure of this myth, the dream of a return to an original purity and integrity, to the one, unique centre of *what is*. But time remains. This results from the beginning of time, from the beginning *as* time. In *Glas*, Derrida demonstrates how the purity of the origin was always already contaminated by its need for relations, for opposition, for division, for time and space. The *one* can only exist inasmuch as it is always already divided; as always already divided, it could never have been *one*. The double did not add itself to the simple. There always was duplicity. If there were a centre, Derrida says elsewhere, it would be another name for

death, for lack of play and chance. But there is play and there is chance because everything has begun with repetition. (WD, 297). The double has not added itself to the simple. It has divided it and supplemented it. There always already was a double origin plus its repetition. Nothing has preceded repetition, no present has kept watch over the trace, and time no longer follows a line of modified present tenses. The family metaphor declares that the centre of the centre is an ellipsis, that while *Sa* is the deletion and relief of time, the thought of *Sa* in/as time forms the limit to *Sa*: “This ellips(e)(is) is time – the truth of space” (G, 220a). This ellipsis (is) (opens) the need for representation. This need is implanted from the first, making the centre possible and impossible. And if the centre no longer has absolute integrity, then it also no longer has absolute authority.

For Derrida, submission to the belief in the *what is* is a form of “captivity” in which one is “incapable of thinking anything that could be added to the whole, whether to fulfil it or to think it *as such*, not even its image or mimetic double. [...] But if the formula for absolute knowledge can be thought about and put in question, the whole is treated then by a ‘part’ bigger than itself; this is the strange subtraction of a *remark* [...] which constitutes the whole, necessarily, as a *totality-effect*” (D, 54). This part escapes beyond return, no longer sends back its image, no longer constitutes an object finished and posed. The total Book of knowledge is subject to the disseminating forces of a *mimesis* that is under the control of neither an absolute beginning nor the reassuring certitude of an absolute outside.

Conclusion

This thesis has sought to show the importance of metaphor and *mimesis* for understanding both Derrida’s work and his reading of Hegel. Metaphor and *mimesis* provide fundamental structures through which knowledge comes to the mind of man, and by which man is able to repeat that knowledge. A chain of analogy, originating at the centre, determines that centre as an origin capable of issuing forth and detaching delegates such

that man can learn and repeat what he has learnt in his own proxies and delegations. The series endorses the privileging of sight (and sound), in order to prescribe and proscribe the place of writing and metaphoricity in the Book of philosophy.

But it has also been seen how Derrida calls the concept of *mimesis* to account. Although *Glas* does not explicitly concern itself with the question of *mimesis*, by drawing on Derrida's readings of Plato and his work on 'economimesis,' it has been shown that *mimesis* can be found at work in Hegel's text and in Derrida's reading of it. Moreover, by re-inscribing *Dissemination* within the framework of both ontological and deconstructed *mimesis*, I hope to have uncovered a certain consistency in Derrida's thinking in that text. For at first glance *Dissemination* can appear to be a collection of apparently disparate 'essays.' Now, I do not wish to suggest that *Dissemination* is in any way 'about' *mimesis* and risk claiming that it is "a collection of *three* 'essays' whose itinerary it would be time, after the fact, to recognize; indeed, whose continuity and underlying laws could now be pointed out" (D, 3). Everything Derrida says about thematism prevents this. But in the three essays of *Dissemination*, whose 'preface' ('Outwork') thus acts like a fourth side, there is a recurrent interest in the concept and dismantling of *mimesis*, one which allows for the thinking of Derrida's writing as that which takes place *between* philosophy and literature, which is written on the 'tain' of philosophy's mirror, thereby producing a text which is "assembled otherwise" (D, 3).

Glas, and *Dissemination* show Derrida re-thinking and re-emphasising what were previously the marginal(ised) aspects in philosophy's pursuit of the truth. Rather than focus on positive terms, on meaning or truth, Derrida re-inscribes these terms in a more generalised economy of *différance* in order to show the importance of syntactics, the processes of metaphorisation and *mimesis*. It is this re-inscription that leads some critics, such as Habermas, to label deconstruction as a rhetorical procedure. Ironically enough, it is also for this reason that deconstruction is often appropriated as a methodology, forged

into a tool of analysis that can be applied to literary texts or taught in critical theory departments. But before such 'appropriation,' deconstruction is concerned with the 'necessary contamination' between the different aspects and levels of textuality, and with philosophy as inscribed in this *différance*, in the play of original and repetition, presence and representation. The relations that were once thought of as simply supplemental to truth, such as metaphor and *mimesis*, are crucial to it and refuse to disappear in the face of it. Relation-ness *remains*, leaving an irreducible trace within the text and marking its endless necessity.

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